The Complete PROSE of T. S. Eliot

The Critical Edition

VOLUME 7

A European Society, 1947–1953

edited by

IMAN JAVADI &

RONALD SCHUCHARD

VISIT…

The COMPLETE PROSE *of*
T. S. Eliot

RONALD SCHUCHARD, *General Editor*

The COMPLETE PROSE *of*

T. S. Eliot

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VOLUME 7: *A European Society, 1947-1953*

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A EUROPEAN SOCIETY, 1947-1953

Introduction

At the beginning of the postwar period covered in this volume (1947 to 1953), Eliot was on the threshold of elevation to the highest plateaus of literary eminence, soon to receive numerous honorary degrees, the British Order of Merit, the French Légion d'honneur, and the Swedish Nobel Prize for Literature. His earlier "idea" of a Christian society (*ICS*, 1939) had developed into the "idea" of a European society, and his vision of the essentials of cultural unity would soon find completion in *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (*NTDC*) in 1948. Now fifty-eight and sharing a flat with John Hayward, he began the second period of his play writing with the composition of *The Cocktail Party* for its first performance at the Edinburgh Festival in 1949, followed by *The Confidential Clerk* for the Festival in 1953. Despite his wartime declaration that his interests had shifted to dramatic writing and criticism after the Faber publication of *Four Quartets*, his literary and cultural criticism continued unabated: no fewer than ten major essays appeared between "Milton II" (1947) and "The Three Voices of Poetry" (1953), and he wrote introductions, prefaces, and forewords to no fewer than twelve books by international authors, plus four to special editions of his own. During this period he served as president of Books Across the Sea, the Fédération britannique des comités de l'Alliance française, the London Library, and the Poets' Theatre Guild of the British Drama League. He gave fêted lectures and readings in Italy, Germany, France, Belgium, and America, continued to record his poems and essays for broadcasts, and wrote dozens of public letters to the press. And yet, now, at the pinnacle of his career, the extraordinary honorifics and productivity were subject to frequent interruption and delay by illnesses and surgeries and by the deaths of family and friends. None of the deaths was more unsettling than that of his estranged and mentally ill wife Vivien, who passed away suddenly of heart failure on 22 January 1947 in a private sanatorium, Northumberland House, Stoke Newington, where she had been institutionalized since July 1938. John Hayward told Robert Sencourt that when he informed Eliot that she had died in the night, he "buried his face in his hands, crying: 'Oh God! Oh God!'"[1]

Eliot was emotionally devastated as he reached out to friends and received condolences. "You will not know how helpful it was to me to dine with you last night," he wrote to Enid and Geoffrey Faber on the 24th. "I am going through an infernal passage which, like all infernos, is incommunicable, though perhaps some of it may be explainable at a later time." On the 28th he wrote to Christina and Frank Morley in America that to him her death "is something that seems to go much deeper than grief – indeed, to feel grief or loss would make it very much easier. I think I had concealed from myself the fact that the past can't be written off, and that it determines the future." That day he revealed to Violet Schiff that he "had not seen her since 1933. For her, death was only a release: to me, in spite of, or perhaps because of, this long separation, it came as a very great shock." On the 29th he was accompanied by the Fabers to the funeral in Pinner, Middlesex, where Vivien's brother Maurice had arranged for her interment next to her mother. After a week of mourning, Eliot wrote to Richard de la Mare on 4 February that he was "very much touched by your kindness in writing to me," adding that "a death is the more shattering, when it brings back so much that was painful. If life had been happier, death would be more easily borne. The effect has been much more disturbing than I could have anticipated."

Even as Eliot struggled to come to terms with the impact of Vivien's death on his past, present, and future life, he was mourning the death of Karl Mannheim, one of his closest intellectual friends during the past decade. They had challenged each other on the relation of Church and State, Christianity and culture in the Moot, a group of intellectuals and professionals who met several times a year from 1938 to 1947 to discuss philosophical-theological and social-political problems of the times. Mannheim and Adolf Löwe, fellow sociologists and professors at the University of Frankfurt, fled in 1933 under Hitler's anti-Semitic threats and established themselves as lecturers at the London School of Economics. Eliot was quick to review Mannheim's *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (1940), crediting him with "a judicial and remarkably impartial temper of mind, which refuses to present the difficult as if it were simple, or to allow prejudice or emotion to usurp the province of thinking. . . . This is, in fact, a book which everyone seriously interested in the future of our society ought to read" (6.74). Mannheim, who went on to become Chair of Sociology in the Institute of Educational Studies at the University of London, had died on 9 January 1947, but as Eliot was in the midst of a

ten-day hospitalization for bronchitis he did not learn of it for several days. The day before Vivien's death he sent to *The Times* a personal complement to the paper's earlier obituary, describing "the remarkable influence which Mannheim had come to exercise, within the short period of his residence in this country, upon men of his own generation . . . who had the benefit of his acquaintance" (7.5). Mannheim's influence is paramount in *NTDC*, which Eliot prefaces by stating that his debt to Mannheim "is much greater than appears from the one context in which I discuss his theory." Using his significant disagreements with Mannheim's theory to clarify his own in the volume, on 8 July Eliot wrote to Löwe, who had moved on to the New School of Social Research in New York with the assistance of Eliot and Horace Kallen, a member of the faculty: "I miss him very much both as a friend and as an intellectual force. He was one of those rare writers whose views are almost more stimulating to one's thought when one disagrees with them, though on the other hand I know that I have profited and been deeply influenced by his thinking."

During the previous November Eliot learned that his brother, Henry Ware Eliot, Jr., was gravely ill with leukemia. For thirty years Henry had devotedly tracked down and preserved every piece of writing by or about his younger brother, providing financial assistance when needed. Alerted that he could be summoned on short notice to travel to Boston, Eliot began arranging lectures and readings at American universities to cover his expenses. Concerned that he had no lecture ready except "Milton II," which was commissioned by and reserved for the annual address of the British Academy, he thought he could revive and rewrite an essay on Samuel Johnson, informing I. A. Richards on 9 November 1946 that he was "just finishing the second version of my *Culture* stuff, and that's no use for lectures." He was greatly relieved to hear on 24 January 1947, while grieving over Vivien's death, that Henry's condition had considerably improved and that his doctor advised an April visit. In his letter of the 28th to Frank Morley, who had recently corresponded with Henry, Eliot replied humorously that Henry's letters to him "are apt to be solemnly factual, and mentioning bibliographical points (I shouldn't like to tell him how my own bibliography bores me, or how many trivial scraps I have only preserved to please him – I should be rather gleeful if the Eliotiana all perished in a holocaust – after his death)." Nearly a decade earlier, in fact, Eliot had taken pains to make John Hayward his literary executor and "Keeper of the Archive" in London, to complement Henry's collection in Boston.

Eliot landed in New York on 23 April with a sixty-day visa and made his way to Cambridge as a guest of I. A. Richards to visit Henry and other family members. His first lecture was scheduled for 3 May at the Frick Gallery in New York, where he repeated "Milton II," which he had presented to the British Academy on 26 March. Henry died suddenly two days later, as Eliot reported to John Hayward on 14 May: "Henry died on the 5th, five hours after being removed to a hospital. It was all very difficult, as I had to do a reading at Wellesley College that afternoon, and the hospital didn't call me back in time, and I got there an hour late. I don't think he died in much pain. . . . Anyway, it is satisfactory that I arrived in time to spend a good many hours with him." Henry's unexpected passing required a rescheduling of lectures and readings, including a cancellation at Harvard that week, but after arranging the funeral and a requiem with the Society of St. John the Evangelist he was free to honor commitments at Princeton, the National Gallery, and Yale.

When Eliot arrived in New Haven he was met by Emily Hale, who was then teaching at the Concord Academy in Massachusetts. They had last been together in July 1946, their first reunion since the beginning of the war, as Eliot described to Willard Thorp after his return on 5 August: "I had four very happy days in Emily's company in Dorset, Vermont, where she was taking the leading role in [Noël Coward's] *Blithe Spirit*." And then on the 14th to Edith Perkins, Emily's aunt, that his visit "brought me happiness enough to last through the winter: it was a happy time beyond my expectations: first because of Emily." Upon arrival in New Haven, Emily presented for inscription her copy of the first edition of *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917), in which he wrote, with strangely cold formality and detachment, "Inscribed for / Miss Emily Hale / by T. S. Eliot / New Haven / 26.v.47." Continuing to distance himself from Emily after Vivien's death, Eliot wrote to Dorothea Richards on 18 March that Emily had earlier invited him to address her school on his visit: "I have agreed, to oblige a friend, to give the prize-day address at a school in Concord on the 4th June, a task I dislike exceedingly." Dutifully, he gave the address on 3 June and permitted publication for free distribution to alumnae as *On Poetry: An Address by T. S. Eliot on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Concord Academy*. "I have always been haunted," he told his audience, "that nothing I have written is really of permanent value . . . I am sure that for a poet humility is the most essential virtue" (7.13).

There followed a remarkable procession of commencements and honorary degrees – at Harvard on the 5th, Princeton on the 17th, Yale on the 18th – before returning to London and his "*Culture* stuff." "I am told that the visit did me good," he wrote to his close friend Mary Trevelyan on 26 June, "but I found it a great strain at the time – the only good thing was that I was so very busy. Incidentally, I met General Marshall, General Bradley . . . and several other notables, and heard President Truman speak. . . . Otherwise, and except for the pomps and ceremonies of Harvard, Yale and Princeton, a very sad and distressing visit indeed." It was equally so for Emily Hale, who confided in her friend Lorraine Havens on 7 August:

> His visit here was a sort of public nightmare of events – his only brother died soon after he arrived – and from that strain he had spent himself thro' lectures and readings plus the *three* commencements when he received honorary degrees. . . . I am going to tell you, dear friend, that what I confided to you long ago of a mutual affection he and I have had for each other has come to a strange impasse whether permanent or not, I do not know. Tom's wife died last winter very suddenly. I supposed he would then feel free to marry me as I believed he always intended to do. But such proves not to be the case. We met privately two or three times to try to sift the situation as thoroughly as possible – he loves me – I believe this wholly – but apparently not in the way usual to men less gifted i.e. with complete love thro' a married relationship. I have not completely given up hope that he may yet recover from this – to me – abnormal reaction, but on the other hand I cannot allow myself to hold on to anything so delicately uncertain.[2]

The emotional and psychological impasse would inform and be transformed into the crucial struggle at the center of *The Cocktail Party*, and it would indeed prove to be permanent.

* * * *

Shortly before his death, Karl Mannheim was invited to be Director of the European delegation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Though Mannheim's health prevented consideration, he may have seen it more as an honor than a temptation due to the organization's broad and shifting statements of goals; he certainly would have discussed the matter with Eliot, who was kept aware of the drafts

of aims and projects by Mary Trevelyan, who was in the Paris headquarters as director of UNESCO's Field Survey Bureau in the Department of Reconstruction, responsible for surveying educational needs in countries after the war. As he developed his own vision of cultural reconstruction, Eliot was highly critical of the organization's objectives and conception of "culture," such that at the beginning of his introduction to *NTDC* he quotes from Article I of the constitution drafted for UNESCO's founding conference in 1945:

1. To develop and maintain mutual understanding and appreciation of the life and culture, the arts, the humanities, and the sciences of the peoples of the world, as a basis for effective international organization and world peace.
2. To cooperate in extending and in making available to all peoples for the service of common human needs the world's full body of knowledge and culture, and in assuring its contribution to the economic stability, political security, and general well-being of the peoples of the world.[3]

To Eliot, these were preposterous resolutions of a postwar liberal humanitarianism. "I only quote them to call attention to the word *culture*," he wrote, "and to suggest that before acting on such resolutions we should try to find out what this one word means. . . . In general, the word is used . . . as in the passage just quoted, as a kind of emotional stimulant – or anaesthetic" (7.196-97).

Little did he know that he had already been targeted as a potential supporter of UNESCO by his friend Julian Huxley, the director-general. On 27 March 1947 Huxley sent Eliot and other cultural-intellectual leaders a duplicated memorandum containing its current declaration on human rights, with a request for response and with a personal note to Eliot, saying "how much I hope you will help us with this really rather exciting project. I know you have thought deeply over the problem of the freedom of the creative writer in relation to society – and to his duties." The Commission on Human Rights, an arm of UNESCO under American influence, had created an eighteen-member drafting committee chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt to produce what became the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The state of the draft that Eliot received is unknown, as he removed it from Huxley's letter, but it evidently showed the ongoing conflict between

universal human rights and domestic jurisdiction, between UN intervention and national sovereignty. On 15 April Eliot wrote to Mary Trevelyan about the document: "Oh dear. He calls it a 'project,' and is sure that I shall agree that it is 'of great intrinsic interest and of great importance at the present juncture.' That is, I suppose, the jargon in which his mind is saturated." As he was about to leave for America and had no time for a studied response, he wrote frankly to Huxley on 18 April that

> my first sentiment is one of astonishment that Unesco should be occupied with such a formulation. A statement of the rights of man . . . could never, I think, be framed in such a way as to command the assent of all intelligent men. . . . I should have thought that Unesco would be better occupied in the more particular activities of beneficence in helping injured countries to reorganize the higher part of their life.
>
> As for the document itself . . . the principal question is that of the assumptions on which it is based. . . . I confess that the design seems to me to be futile, in so far as the consequences do not turn out to be positively mischievous.

Huxley wrote back a week later that the Commission on Human Rights had imposed the declaration on UNESCO, whose present aim was "to help them in regard to what one may call the philosophic basis for such a formulation. . . . The most important thing that Unesco can do in this field [is] to publish the opinions of individual philosophers, statesmen, scientists, writers . . . on this subject. . . . It is for this reason that I hope you may be able to reconsider your decision, and write something for us – perhaps in relation to your special interests as a man of letters? . . . (Perhaps the most interesting thing you could do would be to examine the assumptions!)."

Eliot did not receive the letter until his return from America. "I am glad to learn that 'The Declaration of the Rights of Man' is an undertaking which has been imposed upon Unesco rather than one initiated by it," he replied on 24 June. "I regret my misunderstanding and offer you my sympathy for having to bear this burden. I hope to study the declaration soon and to have some comments to make upon it." He let this little-known conflict with Huxley and UNESCO drop until September, when he was drawn back into the fray after reading in *The Times* another official's statement, in defense against a reader's criticism, that UNESCO's function was to promote "international cooperation in education, science, and culture." "The formulation of Unesco's purposes is so obscure," Eliot was moved to write in the issue of

20 September, that he had only one question to ask: "how is the term culture to be interpreted? I had always understood culture to comprehend education and science, as well as other interests" (7.9). His letter prompted a reply on 10 October from Huxley, who explained how culture and science came to be added to the charter's original focus on education – upon realization that the Organization should concern itself also with "the culture which education should be designed to transmit" – and who gave the "most commonly used" definition of culture as implying "the cultivation of the mind, including some acquaintance with the artistic and intellectual achievements of the past as well as the present, and usually focused more on literature and the arts and their applications than upon the sciences" (5). Exasperated by Huxley's mixed uses of culture, and convalescing from a "heavy" hernia operation, Eliot wrote to Hope Mirrlees on 16 October: "I have never been so thoroughly anaesthetised, for it was 24 hours before I was quite conscious again! – and being fretted by Julian Huxley's letter in *The Times* coming out just when I could not answer it: now *The Times* have a good excuse . . . for not printing my reply"; it appeared, however, in the issue of 17 October, concluding: "It is only because I am convinced of the capital importance . . . of trying to form clear and distinct ideas of what we want to do before we set out to do it, that I enter upon these considerations" (7.19). Eliot had himself labored to define education and its relation to culture in the sixth and final chapter of *NTDC*, "Notes on Education and Culture": "And we know, that whether education can foster and improve culture or not, it can surely adulterate and degrade it" (7.266).

Eliot had meanwhile received an invitation from Ernest Pooley, chairman of the British Arts Council, to join him in serving on UNESCO's Co-operating Body of the Arts, with a special request that he also interest himself in "the project for listing, and arranging about the translation, of the world classics." Thanking him "for the compliment implied by the invitation," Eliot replied on 9 October that he planned to write to Mrs. Jacquetta Hawkes at the Secretariat of UNESCO's Co-operating Bodies in the UK, who had written to encourage his acceptance, "my reasons for declining this honour, and for expressing the hope, if it is not too late to hope, that UNESCO may abandon this project of translating all the classics into all languages. It seems to me, indeed, a most undesirable enterprise." Writing to Mrs. Hawkes that same day, before going into a nursing home for an operation to have all of his teeth removed, he declared that the documents that she sent with her letter "strike me as the most fantastic nonsense I have ever

read; and that if Swift could have read the like, before composing the Voyage to Laputa, he would have been reduced to silence." He further relieved his vexation on 22 October by sending her a list of ten cogent reasons why the translation scheme should be abandoned as a reconstruction project, including the briefest: "The suggestion that for everybody to read everybody's classics in translation would promote peace, amity and understanding has no foundation. It might well have the contrary effect."

The venue of controversy then shifted from *The Times* to the *Continental Daily Mail* in Paris, to which Huxley wrote on 30 October to inform its readers of UNESCO's "top priorities," its "first concern" of "international understanding," and its "cornerstone" project of universal literacy – "already being started in Haiti, in China and British East Africa" – among other "pilot projects" (4). The editor Noel Barber invited Eliot's reply, published on 12 November: "The only 'aim' that I have been able to understand," he wrote in criticism of its overly ambitious schemes, "is the aim to help devastated countries to rebuild their schoolhouses, train and pay their teachers, and equip the children with books, writing materials and other necessaries . . . and that is why I deprecate grandiose and cloudy schemes for 'producing international understanding' – and even the more definite, but still less urgent task of teaching the inhabitants of Haiti and British East Africa to read and write" (7.45-46). Equally vexed by the absurdity of the universal literacy project, he wrote to Trevelyan on 19 November in anticipation of a rebuttal from Huxley: "I am most grateful to you for the UNESCO annual report, in case Julian comes back . . . but I must make it clear that I am not trying to skin Julian alive. I am at present concerned with UNESCO."

Rather than reply to Eliot's letter as expected, Huxley gave the task to his assistant director-general Jean Thomas, who attempted in the issue of 10 December to justify the diverse aims of UNESCO to Eliot and gently to reprove his views: "As for the fundamental education campaign, may I suggest that in determining the importance of this work Mr. Eliot is speaking as a European, with the European's tendency to forget that the peoples of Africa and Asia represent the great majority of mankind. // I mention only a few of the projects which Unesco, operating at the behest of its member Governments, considers of very vital importance. . . . I hope that we shall be able to count upon the support of such a distinguished man of good will as Mr. T. S. Eliot" (2).

Eliot had embarked on an eight-day visit to Rome at the time, continuing his service as a lecturer and cultural ambassador to European nations

for the British Council, begun during the war years – an approach to "mutual understanding" more to his liking. He lectured on "Poetry in the Theatre" to an audience of 850; on "Poe and his Influence on European Literature" to 550; dined with the P. E. N. Club; read his poems at the American Academy; spoke at a reception in his honor as a newly elected foreign member, one of few, and one of even fewer non-scientists, of the Accademia dei Lincei, a scientific society of which Galileo had been a member; and had an audience with Pope Pius XII, with whom he discussed the relation of poetry and religion, and who gave him two blessed rosaries, one of which he gave to Mary Trevelyan.

In his reply on return to Jean Thomas in the *Continental Daily Mail* of 20 December, which brought the long conflict with UNESCO in the public arena to a close, Eliot admitted that he was "not unaware of the claims of devastated Asia, or of the obligation of Unesco to attempt to meet them," but he was still concerned that several of its projects were not directly relevant to the work of reconstruction after the war, such as that of "translating the 'classics' of every living language into every other." But Eliot's main concern was the philosophy underlying its decisions: "Where does the philosophy come from? What congress of profound thinkers decided . . . that in 1947 we should set about to teach everybody in the world to read and write?" Though he said in closing that he did not wish to reproach the directors for obligations that they may be obliged by a Commission to attempt, he declared that "it is not sufficient to be told that the charter, or the constitution, of Unesco requires that certain activities be set on foot" (7.100).

Eliot and Huxley did not let strong disagreements or rhetorical language affect their friendship: all remained cordial, and on 19 January1948 Huxley invited him to "come to Paris and see Unesco in action," an invitation declined with polite excuse. And Jean Thomas had no hesitation in asking Eliot to write letters of support for Italian writers Eugenio Montale and Giovanni Battista Angioletti, both candidates for administrative secretariats at UNESCO. With the assistance of Mary Trevelyan, Eliot managed to place the Bengali professor J. C. Ghosh in a two-year post in the Paris headquarters, but as he described to Martin Browne on 8 September 1950, ever ready to assist but never uncritical of UNESCO, "he did not like Paris, and he was quite rightly, I think, repelled by the futility of the kind of work he was employed to do."

In pitting his conservative Eurocentric vision of cultural restoration after a massively destructive war in opposition to the liberal humanitarianism of

UNESCO's universal vision of improving the "general well-being of the peoples of the world," Eliot believed, as he had carefully delineated in "Cultural Diversity and European Unity" (1945) that

> unless there can be harmony in Europe, it is useless to consider the hope of harmony in the world as a whole. . . . But it is as well to have the total problem at the back of our minds, because the world problem has complexities which are not apparent from a study of Europe alone; and we may be in danger, otherwise, of assuming that we can have a wholly self-contained Europe. We are familiar with grandiose schemes for a universal politico-economic Federation of the World. . . . It is obvious . . . that we cannot proceed straight from the European problem to the world problem; and, on the other hand, we cannot expect to settle the European problem wholly without reference to what is going on elsewhere, for world relations exist already, and affect the lives of all of us. (6.635)

On the one hand, Eliot was indeed genuinely "concerned with UNESCO" and its future; on the other, he believed that it was his responsibility as a man of letters to redress what he saw as an organizational imbalance of objectives at a crucial moment in a universal cultural enterprise, a belief stated equably and wisely in the final paragraph of *NTDC*, informed as it is by the UNESCO episode:

> I have maintained that we cannot directly set about to create or improve culture – we can only will the means which are favourable to culture, and to do this we must be convinced that these means are themselves socially desirable. And beyond that point, we must proceed to consider how far these conditions of culture are possible, or even . . . compatible with all the immediate and pressing needs of an emergency. For one thing to avoid is a *universalised* planning; one thing to ascertain is the limits of the plannable. My enquiry, therefore, has been directed on the meaning of the word *culture*: so that everyone should at least pause to examine what this word means to him, and what it means to him in each particular context before using it. Even this modest aspiration might, if realised, have consequences in the policy and conduct of our "cultural" enterprises. (7.267)

* * * *

As Eliot developed his theories of culture and education during the war years, one of the primary preoccupations of his prose writing was the

wide-ranging responsibility of the man of letters after the war, evident in the recurrence of "responsibility" in several titles: "Responsibility and Power" (1943); "The Responsibility of the European Man of Letters" (1944); and "The Responsibility of the Man of Letters in the Cultural Restoration of Europe" (1944), with variations on the theme in other essays. The man of letters is responsible for addressing national provincialism, its isolation and distance from the best European society and letters due to undue emphasis on its own culture and politics; Eliot gives voice to that responsibility in an early essay, "Tradition and the Practice of Poetry" (1936): "Indeed, every civilised country is in grave danger of provincialism to-day, with the closing of intellectual as well as economic frontiers . . . and it is the endless task of men of letters to disturb the provincialism of their particular place and time" (5.307). To Eliot, the collective responsibilities of the European man of letters are admittedly first to his art and national language ("to purify the dialect of the tribe"), to freedom of speech and press; then is he responsible for the preservation of the common Graeco-Roman-Judaeo-Christian traditions on which European culture was built; for the promotion of unity within the diversity of European nations; for the restoration of cultural communication between nations after five years of wartime isolation; and finally for exercising his moral and social responsibility to his people in all classes and for being in ready opposition to certain political and economic programs that carry unseen cultural consequences. "The responsibility of the man of letters at the present time," he wrote,

> is neither to ignore politics and economics, nor, certainly, to desert literature in order to precipitate himself into controversy on matters which he does not understand. But he should be vigilantly watching the conduct of politicians and economists, for the purpose of criticising and warning, when the decisions and actions . . . are likely to have cultural consequences. Of these consequences the man of letters is one of the best qualified to judge. Of the possible cultural consequences of their activities, politicians and economists are usually oblivious; the man of letters is better qualified to foresee them, and to perceive their seriousness. (6.524)

The thrust of Eliot's catalogue of responsibilities was to motivate marginalized men of letters to come out of their accustomed isolation, silence, and self-imposed exile and take their rightful place at the center of the cultural domain, exercising their unheard voices in restoring the cultural

health of their nations by the influence they exert and the example they set. In this call, Eliot was following the example of his fellow poetic dramatist and prolific cultural critic W. B. Yeats, who insinuated himself into every corner of Irish culture and nationality in his prose writings, even dramatizing the necessity of restoring "the ancient right of poets" in *The King's Threshold* (1904). The poet Seanchan is prepared to starve himself to death unless the King brings him back to sit with the "Bishops, Soldiers, and Makers of the Law – / Who long had thought it against their dignity / For a mere man of words to sit amongst them / At the great council of the State and share / In their authority," and who believed "that it was the men who ruled the world, / And not the men who sang to it, who should sit / Where there was the most honour."[4]

Eliot himself was now dedicated to taking a larger leadership role in the restoration of cultural communication between Britain and European countries, serving his vision of the "European Idea" wherever he might have an impact. Following his visit to Rome as a veteran cultural ambassador of the British Council (to Sweden, April-May 1942, and Paris, May 1945) he continued to accept invitations for lectures, readings, interviews, honorary degrees, and special awards throughout Britain, Europe, and America. When he returned to London from his audience with Pope Pius XII, he learned that he was on the New Year Honours list for 1948 to receive the Order of Merit from King George VI, to whom Eliot presented himself at Buckingham Palace on 12 February. The King, dressed as Admiral of the Fleet, presented Eliot with the gold cross on a ribbon before the two sat before the fire and discussed mutual friends and acquaintances and the future of Eliot's work. A week later the King attended a performance of *Murder in the Cathedral* with the Queen and Princess Margaret, "and as it was intimated that I should be there," Eliot wrote to his sister Marian on 22 February, "I was. It is very unusual for the King to do anything like this . . . and is considered a great honour. Between the acts they came round and had the actors presented to them."

Honored as he was by the recognition, Eliot was more absorbed by his active membership and lecturing in several French societies in the UK: the Maison française d'Oxford, a center and library for the promotion of cultural exchange, at which the French ambassador made Eliot a Chevalier (Knight) of the Légion d'honneur in June 1948; the Institut français in London, for cross-cultural exchange under the presidency of Henri Jourdan; and mainly the larger Fédération britannique des comités de l'Alliance

française, self-described as an "Association des amis de la langue et de la littérature françaises," its widespread dual-nation membership holding annual assemblies in different English and French cities under the patronage of the French ambassador. Welcomed into the Fédération in 1946, Eliot was soon placed on its governing Conseil, which created a new committee in his honor in 1948, the "Sous-comité culturel" (Cultural Sub-Committee), naming him its president and responsible for annual reports on its cultural activities. He gave his first address to the Assemblée générale as its new vice president in 1949, and as its new president in 1952, with an oblique reference to UNESCO: "Without . . . suggesting that the Fédération should set itself such grandiose aims as those of some recent international organisations of 'cultural' purpose, I like nevertheless to present our activity in its wider context":

> If European civilisation is to maintain itself . . . we must first of all maintain the cultural kinship between France and Britain. . . . We err if we take pride in our institutions rather than in the culture out of which these institutions have arisen. And we risk – both in Britain and in France – turning to the opposite extreme of self-depreciation. . . . But both France and Britain need to recover belief in themselves – and in so far as they believe in themselves for the right reasons, they will believe in each other. That is to believe in ourselves . . . as a community of the living and the dead and the unborn, an historical identity of culture. For the conservation of such belief in our own culture – without which all other belief of a people in itself is vain – the Fédération Britannique de l'Alliance Française has its modest, but important function." (7.742-43)

All of Eliot's addresses to the Fédération are published here in volume 7 for the first time. On retirement from the presidency in 1955, he wrote to Henri Jourdan of the Institut français: "I am at least happy to have served the Alliance Française to the best of my abilities, in a capacity for which neither natural endowment nor previous experience had qualified me. I shall continue to take a lively interest in the affairs of the Fédération Britannique, and also, of course, in the Institut Français, and I assure you, and wish to assure the Conseil, that I value very highly the tribute paid me by joining my name to that of Lord de la Warr as a Président Honoraire."

All of his presidencies of various cultural organizations and their concomitant responsibilities began to overlap. As president of Books Across the Sea since 1943, he worked with English and American officials in London

and New York to facilitate the exchange of over 6000 books, including children's books, between the two nations during and after the war, giving speeches and seeking donors in support of its aims and for the growth of its Walter Hines Page Memorial Library. When Books Across the Sea was absorbed into the English-Speaking Union following his presidential address in London in March 1948, he stayed on as president and library spokesman until he turned it over to Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, in 1953. As president of the Poets' Theatre Guild of the British Drama League in 1949-50, he addressed its members with a lecture printed as *The Aims of Poetic Drama* (7.356). A member of the London Library since 1918, and expressly indebted to its resources for his growth as a literary journalist and critic, he served as its president from 1952 until his death, steering the library through subscription and rate increases and establishing the Carlyle Trust to keep it affordable and accessible to young writers and needy researchers. "I *am* thinking of the services so many of its members have performed which they could not have performed so well without the London Library," he said in his inaugural address. "I am thinking of the Library as itself performing a service to English civilisation. And as for the future, I shall endeavour to give grounds for my belief, that the London Library, instead of diminishing in value, is becoming more necessary than ever before" (7.757). Invitations to join and serve other cultural organizations as president or in another leadership capacity were frequent: his standard reply in declining was that he could not allow himself to join an organization, however attractive and tempting, if he did not believe that he could make a significant contribution to it; he did not wish to see himself placed on any masthead in name only.

* * * *

Eliot now began making annual trips to America, partly for academic engagements – in October 1948 for two months as a visiting fellow at Princeton University's Institute for Advanced Study. "T. S. Eliot comes to Princeton this winter," Emily Hale wrote to Lorraine Havens on 12 September, "but I expect I shall see him only occasionally."[5] She had moved on from Concord to Abbot Academy in Andover, twenty miles north of Boston. Over a year after the New Haven "impasse," Eliot sought to honor their friendship with a meeting, writing to Edith Perkins on 18 September that he planned to visit Emily in Andover but confessed that he did not know "whether it is possible to go out there for the day, or whether it is so

far away that I must arrange a night." With his Princeton stipend covering most expenses, he needed to arrange only two lectures, the first on 3 November at his old School, Milton Academy, wearing his school tie as he gave its annual War Memorial Address on "Leadership and Letters" (7.324). On returning to Princeton the next day, he received a telegram from the Swedish Academy notifying him that he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. But before he could return to London to prepare for Stockholm, he had a double obligation to fulfill – a trip to Washington to visit Ezra Pound in St. Elizabeths hospital, and to the Library of Congress, not only to give a lecture, "From Poe to Valéry" (7.290), but as a Fellow appointed to serve on the selection committee for the first Bollingen Prize in Poetry. He had no notion of the violent controversy that would follow the Pound-Bollingen congruence.

Eliot had been deeply concerned about Pound's well-being since he was charged and indicted for treason following his pro-Fascist broadcasts on Rome radio from 1941 to 1943, his arrest in May 1945 by the American Army and incarceration in a military detention camp in Pisa, and his eventual transfer to Washington and St. Elizabeths Hospital for the insane after a Federal court ruled him mentally unfit for trial in February 1946. In May, Eliot circulated a letter of appeal addressed to C. Day Lewis among other English writers for their signatures in support of mitigating the treason charges, explaining that if he believed that Pound had revealed secrets, betrayed American or allied soldiers, or taken the part of the enemy against his own country, "then I should not raise my voice in his favour":

> He had for some years held views of which I myself disapproved strongly – I have especially in mind his anti-Semitism. But the holding of these views is not in itself a crime. Nor is a belief in fascism a crime. . . . He was certainly unbalanced: but all he did was to say, over the Rome wireless, just what he would have said, through any means of publicity that would have been allowed him, had he been in America, instead of in Italy, throughout the war. And he was, according to his lights, acting in what he believed to be the best interests of his own country.
>
> Since the last war . . . the whole concept of treason . . . has become hopelessly confused.

Prior to his first postwar trip to America in 1946, Eliot wrote an article praising Pound's achievements for the American readers of *Poetry* (Chicago) (6.759), made and stayed in contact with Dorothy Pound, offering not only

financial support but advice and assistance in placing their son Omar in an American university. His primary purpose on arrival was to visit Pound in St. Elizabeths, which occurred on 6 July. "I spent half an hour in his company," he wrote to Rev. Henry Swabey on 20 September, "during which he talked the whole time, and although coherent he slipped so rapidly from one subject to another that it was very difficult to remember the gist of what he said." He wrote to Dorothy on 10 July that he found the windowless prison ward in St. Elizabeths "very grim" and hoped that they could get him moved to a private sanatorium as soon as possible. But his main discovery on that visit, as he wrote to Swabey, was that while Pound was in detention in Pisa he had "written a number of Cantos which contain some very good passages indeed, and I hope when I get the final copy of them from America to be able to publish them."

Eliot visited Pound again on 25 May 1947, after the memorial service for his brother, having arranged a lecture at the National Gallery in Washington the day before for that purpose. He reported to Olga Rudge on 5 July that he found Pound's general health improved, "and the building in which he is now living is much less depressing than where I found him last year. I talked to him sitting at the end of a long corridor, with no supervision; and I understand that he can get fresh air in the grounds." Eliot was now in correspondence with James Laughlin of New Directions about the American and English editions of what was to become *The Pisan Cantos*, agreeing to share expenses of production, but as Pound was still revising and making alterations they had not received the final text. When Eliot finally received first proofs from Laughlin he wrote to Pound on 7 January 1948: "I think this is great stuff. I like this lot of cantos as a whole better than anything since the first thirty." Laughlin went ahead of Faber with an edition of *The Collected Cantos of Ezra Pound*, including the Pisan Cantos (74-84), publicly announced for publication on 30 July with a "statement" by Eliot on the Pisan Cantos: "I find in them the same technical mastery, and a new poignancy of personal speech. Such an achievement is all the more worthy of admiration, because of their having been written under conditions which, for most men, would have stifled inspiration; and which, if they had not stifled inspiration, would certainly have prevented the author from bringing his work to completion" (7.176). Printing delays would hold up the publication of Faber's first separate edition of *The Pisan Cantos* until 22 July 1949. So when he arrived in Washington on 17 November 1948 for his third annual visit with Pound, and for service on the Bollingen committee, Eliot, who

made no nomination, thinking it out of place to take such initiative as a non-resident Fellow and British subject, discovered that the New Directions edition of *The Pisan Cantos* had been nominated by Theodore Spencer and discussed by several Fellows before his arrival.

The distinguished committee of fourteen Fellows, chaired by Léonie Adams, included Conrad Aiken, W. H. Auden, Louise Bogan, Robert Lowell, Katherine Anne Porter, Karl Shapiro, Allen Tate, Willard Thorp, and Theodore Spencer, among others. Instructed not "to be deflected by political considerations . . . from a decision rendered strictly in terms of literary merit," they met mornings and afternoons on 18-19 November over fifteen nominated titles, pausing for Eliot's lecture on Poe's immense influence on Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Valéry and a lunch in his honor before he went to Pound on the 20th. Eliot expressed concern that awarding the Prize to Pound could bring him untoward publicity that could be harmfully exploited in the wrong hands. The committee began voting by mail balloting that went into the new year (ten first place votes for Pound, two for William Carlos Williams); when they announced the $1000 Bollingen Prize for *The Pisan Cantos* on 20 February, they included a statement that they were "aware that objections may be made to awarding a prize to a man situated as is Mr. Pound. In their view, however, the possibility of such objection did not alter the responsibility assumed by the Jury of Selection." In the event, the Jury did not anticipate the sensational press response that followed, heralded as it was by a next-day headline on the front page of the *New York Times*: "Pound, in Mental Clinic, Wins Prize for Poetry Penned in Treason Cell," setting off a steady stream of outrage in national papers and journals for weeks.

The controversy gradually subsided until the American poet and professor Robert Hillyer, of Kenyon College, formerly Boylston Professor at Harvard, renewed his long-standing criticism of the unwelcome influence of Eliot and Pound on American literature with a vicious attack in June issues of the *Saturday Review of Literature*. Hillyer accused them of being the leaders of "Poetry's New Priesthood," allegedly informed by the pro-Fascism and Nazism of Carl Jung, whose Bollingen Tower retreat in Switzerland provided the name of the Prize, and Eliot of influencing his "disciples" on the selection committee to advance and reward the Fascist and anti-Semitic tendencies of Pound's work. These and other charges against Eliot, the Bollingen Foundation, and the Library of Congress were strongly rebutted and collectively signed in a "Statement of the Committee of the Fellows,"

affirming that Eliot "neither initiated the award to Pound nor in any way attempted to influence other members to vote for it" (7.854). When Léonie Adams asked Eliot if he wished to make a separate statement, he replied on 5 July that "individual and un-coordinated public statements by Fellows are hardly what is called for at present. . . . In any case, with regard to Mr. Hillyer and the *Saturday Review*, I think that I am the last person who ought to throw himself into the fray at this moment, inasmuch as I am almost the principal object of attack. I should like to point out that, far from being a 'disciple of Jung,' I do not think I have ever read anything by that author. . . . Mere denial of charges will not accomplish much; for the sort of charges that Mr. Hillyer makes will be believed by the sort of people who want to believe them, whatever denial is made." But as he reflected on the controversy and the damaging public charges made against himself, the Fellows, and the Library over the past five months, he was moved to make a private statement to Adams in his letter of 5 July. Loyal and indebted to Pound's friendship over thirty-five years, and a steadfast champion of his contribution to modern literature, Eliot was not uncritical of his prejudices, politics, and philosophy:

> All I have to say in justification of my casting my own vote in favour of 'The Pisan Cantos,' is that I was convinced that this was the best volume for consideration, and to the best of my knowledge and belief the best published by an American poet during the period in question. I am convinced also that this was the conviction of the other Fellows; I have no reason to believe that any one of the Fellows has the least sympathy with Fascism; I am sure that not one of us does not deplore Pound's way of referring to Jews. There are, I have become aware, people who wish to believe that I am myself an anti-Semite; and I am afraid that it is hopeless to try to convince such people that I am not. I have sometimes wanted to point out that I myself am a Christian and an Englishman, and that some of Pound's remarks about Christianity and about England have been very offensive to me. But this is not the occasion for pointing out in public how antithetical to Pound's philosophy my own is.

The criticism and publicity were largely confined to America. Eliot wore them privately as a Nobel laureate until he wrote to Henry Sherek in New York on 20 September that the attack has "made use of every missile it can find and has naturally turned to the armoury of political abuse . . . the kind of abuse which hitherto I have only been accustomed to receive from

Moscow. In short, I am a Fascist and an anti-Semitic, and I must accordingly be attempting to undermine the American constitution." Few of his readers or critics knew of his public examination and rejection of Fascism and Communism, describing them as political religions destructive of Christianity in his *Criterion* commentaries, reviews, and essays over the past twenty years.[6] But his main concern was with Pound and defending him against treason charges, such as that by the American novelist James A. Michener, who in "An American Letter" to the *Scots Review* had declared Pound "a self-convicted traitor to the nation," among other epithets, which to Eliot bordered on libel. He accordingly protested the unjustified charge against an untried Pound to the editor, who withdrew Michener's opinion with an editorial apology: "Mr Eliot has accepted our explanation and apology and has, as a subscriber to this journal, acknowledged them in a second friendly and generous letter" (7.362, n.2).

When the US Congressional Joint Committee terminated the Library's sponsorship of the Prize (and future prizes) over the negative publicity, the Bollingen Foundation moved the program to Yale University in 1950. After several letter campaigns organized by Eliot, Auden, Wyndham Lewis, Archibald MacLeish, Robert Frost, Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, and other fellow writers to civil authorities, the US Government dismissed the indictment for treason against Pound on 18 April 1958; at age 73 he was released from St. Elizabeths after twelve years of confinement without trial for return to his home in Rapallo.

* * * *

After the initial Bollingen deliberations ended, Eliot returned quickly to Princeton to pack up and begin his long journey back to London and on to Stockholm, arriving the day before the Nobel ceremony on 10 December. As King Gustaf V was ill and unable to attend, Eliot was received by Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf and Crown Princess Lady Louise Mountbatten, the Prince awarding him the diploma and gold medal in the Stockholm City Hall before he delivered his address at the Nobel Banquet that evening. Speaking out of his cultural vision of Europe, Eliot focused on the history of "the poetry of Europe" and the "supra-national value" of poetry: "We may think . . . of the great influence that the poetry of one language can exert on another; we must remember the immense debt of every considerable poet to poets of other languages than his own; we may reflect that the poetry of every country and every language would decline and perish, were it not

nourished by poetry in foreign tongues. . . . I think that in poetry peoples of different countries and different languages . . . acquire an understanding of each other which, however partial, is still essential." In accepting the Prize (£11,016:8s.5d), he told the audience that he stood before them not on his merits as a poet, "but as a symbol, for a time, of the significance of poetry" (7.467). On the day of his return from Stockholm, he learned of the sudden death of another close friend, poet, and writer, Michael Roberts, whose obituary he wrote in *The New English Weekly* (7.451).

Eliot was now a world poet and a revered public figure in the eye of Europe, in high demand to visit, lecture, receive honorary degrees in its cities and universities, and offer tributes to its authors on special occasions, as he does here for Kai Friis Møller, Charles Maurras, August Strindberg, Saint-John Perse, Max Beerbohm, Luigi Pirandello, Rudolf Kassner, Hugh MacDiarmid, and Ananda Coomaraswamy of the British Crown colony of Ceylon. The linguistic eclecticism of this volume, which includes items in French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Swedish, is a testament to Eliot's post-war status as an international presence and influence.

With steps taken to strengthen the cultural link between Britain and France underway, the next essential link to restore was that with Germany. Eliot believed that Germany owed its highest cultural achievements to western civilization and that the unity of Europe depended on Germany's reaffirmation of that allegiance after the war. He had already initiated an appeal to that allegiance in three broadcast talks on the BBC's German Service in March 1946, published in German and English on facing pages in *Die Einheit der europäischen Kultur* (6.709). Such was the broader European scope and interest of the broadcasts that he included them as an appendix, under the English title, "The Unity of European Culture," to *NTDC*, which is more generally focused on defining the essential elements of national culture: class, region, sect and cult, and the relation of culture to politics and education. Eliot begins the first broadcast by informing his audience that from 1922 to 1939 he had been the editor of a discontinued literary journal, *The Criterion*, and that his aim is to reveal how his editorial experience as a man of letters informs his views on the unity of European culture. He then devotes much of the second talk to expanding his stated purpose in the journal of bringing together after World War I "the best in new thinking and new writing in its time, from all the countries of Europe that had anything to contribute to the common good" (7.271). His motive was to reassemble the contemporary "mind of Europe" in its pages, to bring

known and unknown writers out of isolation, those who wrote not only for their own generation and country "but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer . . . has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order" (2.106); to communicate with the editors of European journals, such as the German *Die neue Rundschau* and the Swiss *Neue Schweizer Rundschau*; and to foster a cooperation that would "continually stimulate that circulation of influence of thought and sensibility, between nation and nation in Europe, which fertilises and renovates from abroad the literature of each one of them" (7.272). Earlier, in a moment of exhilaration over the increasing European character of the journal in 1927, Eliot wrote in his "Commentary" an entry titled "The European Idea": "One of the ideas which characterizes our age may be called The European Idea. . . . It is a hopeful sign that a small number of intelligent persons are aware of the necessity to harmonize the interests, and therefore to harmonize first the ideas, of the civilized countries of Western Europe. We are beginning to hear mention of the reaffirmation of the European tradition" (3.156-57). That was the driving force behind *The Criterion*.

But the point that Eliot wished to make in delineating the journal's aims, he declared, "is that in the end they failed. And I attribute this failure chiefly to the gradual closing of the mental frontiers of Europe," giving among examples the fact that "after 1933 contributions from Germany became more and more difficult to find. . . . And, from much of the German writing that I saw in the 30's, by authors previously unknown to me, I formed the opinion that the newer German writers had less and less to say to Europe; that they were more and more saying what could be understood, if understood at all, only in Germany" (7.272). What Eliot makes clear is that his renewed aim of reestablishing cultural reunification in Europe is founded by analogy on his belief in the dormant principles of a literary journal as a model. "*The Criterion*," he wrote,

> had, I believe, a definite character and cohesion, although its contributors were men holding the most diverse political, social and religious views. . . . And I think that also, among our chief contributors and colleagues, there was something which was not so much a consciously held belief, but an unconscious assumption . . . that there existed an international fraternity of men of letters, within Europe: a bond which did not replace, but was perfectly compatible with, national loyalties, religious loyalties, and differences of political philosophy. And that it was our

> business not so much to make any particular ideas prevail, as to maintain intellectual activity on the highest level. (7.273)[7]

Eliot's broadcasts were an encouragement, if not a plea, to Germany and other postwar European nations to spend less time on each other's divisive politics and more on each other's culture, more on their common heritage. "The confusion of culture and politics," he said, "may make a nation intolerant of every culture but its own, so that it feels impelled to stamp out, or to remould, every culture surrounding it. An error of the Germany of Hitler was to assume that every other culture than that of Germany was either decadent or barbaric. Let us have an end of such assumptions" (7.274). Eliot's use of the European spirit of *The Criterion* to indicate a way toward restoring cultural cooperation had an impact on the German Section of the Foreign Office, and on Professor Wolfgang Clemen of the University of Munich, who together collaborated to arrange Eliot's multi-city lecture tour of Germany from 27 October to 19 November 1949, when the universities would be full of students in Hamburg, Bremen, Berlin, Hanover, Hermannsberg, Göttingen, Münster, Bonn, Cologne, Heidelberg, and Munich.

Eliot had cultivated since the mid-1920s a strong personal link to and friendship with the German mediaeval scholar and cultural critic Ernst Robert Curtius, a contributor to *The Criterion* and translator of *The Waste Land* with whom Eliot shared views on European literature and culture, praising his *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (1948) as a "magnificent book" and working hard to have it reviewed in English periodicals. When Eliot's lecture tour was bruited, Curtius suggested to Eliot that he overcome his resistance to Goethe and give a lecture on him.[8] "You are of course right about Goethe," Eliot wrote to him on 14 February 1949. "My few peevish remarks about him have been the result of an early prejudice for which I do not know the reason. Someday I should like to write an essay to make some amends, but it would involve considerable labour and I cannot as present see the prospect of it."

Under the auspices of Professor Clemen, Eliot had received an honorary degree from the University of Munich *in absentia* in June 1948, writing to him on the 12th, with gratitude and regret for absence, that he was pleased to be honored in the city "where some parts of *Prufrock* were written, and some memories of which are preserved in *The Waste Land*." Professor Clemen now requested that Eliot make up for the absence by giving two lectures at Munich, one a general synthesis of *ICS* and *NTDC*. Happy to

comply, Eliot wrote "The Idea of a European Society," which he gave as a standard choice at several universities, and which was subsequently published only in German translation as "Die Idee einer europäischen Gesellschaft" (7.389). He dusted off his unpublished two-part lecture previously given in Edinburgh (1937) and Bristol (1941) on "The Development of Shakespeare's Verse" (5.531), which would be published only in translation as "Shakespeares Verskunst" (7.415). A third popular offering was "The Aims of Poetic Drama" (7.376). As he lectured in English and wished to limit question-answer periods that tired him, Eliot also wrote paragraphs to read out in German – "Remarks in German to German Audiences" – on topics for which he expected questions: the European University, a Christian Society, and Contemporary Writers (7.372). On his return from the grueling three-week tour, he confessed to Eudo Mason on 3 January 1950 that "the solemnity with which I sometimes found myself treated in Germany, together with the general expectation on the part of many whom I met, that I would deliver myself on almost any occasion of some profound and oracular piece of wisdom about life in general, was one of the more exhausting things about the visit." But there could not have been a more welcoming reception for the Nobel laureate: standing-room-only audiences, voluminous press coverage, meetings and dinners with dignitaries and writers, a production in translation of *The Family Reunion* (*Der Familientag*) in Düsseldorf, leading Eliot to write to Henry Sherek on 11 April 1950 that he believed Germany to be "a spiritual home for this play."

In "The Idea of a European Society" Eliot provides a comprehensive summary of the cultural principles informing his vision of a unified European society made up of diversified nations, each sharing the common traditions on which the society was built over centuries. His idea is of a "social organism," comprised of individuals, families, villages, and regions with local identities and cultures, all of which eschew uniformity while contributing to the national culture, which he sees as a product of its local cultures. Moreover, he asserts that national cultures thrive when they are in communication with and nurtured by the cultures of other nations, each maintaining its diversity. "I find in the diversity and unity within one nation," he writes, "a kind of pattern for the larger unit which is Europe" (7.405). Crucial to unity are educational values that promote study of the literature, history, and languages of Greece and Rome, the literature and history of Israel, and the learning of at least one modern language other than one's own: "So far as we know these languages and literatures, we understand better both our own

and every other culture of modern Europe" (7.408). Eliot also holds strongly to his belief that no culture can form, grow, thrive, and survive without a religion. He thus declares that the "common foundation" of European society is the Christian faith and tradition, which are inextricably pervasive and informative of every aspect of European culture: "It is this Christian tradition . . . which makes possible understanding between any two European thinkers, even when neither of them is a professing Christian" (7.411). "If Christianity goes," he had boldly asserted in *NTDC*, "the whole of our culture goes" (7.277). Eliot concludes by calling upon all European nations to assume the responsibility of defining for themselves "some motive for the affirmation of a European society, more positive than the simple motive of self-preservation. . . . It must, in preserving itself, be asserting values for all men at all times; and it is better for a society to perish in asserting these values, than to survive by betraying them" (7.412). The lecture was subsequently broadcast on the BBC Foreign Service but was published only in German.

Back in London after the tour, Eliot agreed to serve as a vice president of the Anglo-German Association and advised Wilhelm Unger on the establishment of an Anglo-German Institute in London. The successful establishment of a cultural link to Germany was followed by the rapid translation and publication of his poetry and prose, the translation and production of his plays, and annual invitations to return. As his expenses were covered by the Foreign Office and Amerika-Haus in Munich, he would not accept payments from universities attempting to remunerate him, requesting that they give the money to German charities. In 1954 he would receive one of Germany's most prestigious cultural awards, the Hanseatic Goethe Prize, though another illness delayed his return to Hamburg until May 1955, when he made amends at last with "Goethe as the Sage" (8.62).

* * * *

Eliot as a man of letters was equally true as a man of Christian faith to exercising his similar responsibilities as a member of the Church of England. Even as he prepared for his baptism on 29 June 1927, he wrote critically in the May issue of *The Criterion* of the Church Assembly's proposed alteration of language and sense in the Book of Common Prayer (3.61). He was now (1949) critical of a proposed translation of the Bible "in the language of the present day," to make it more intelligible for people with no more than elementary schooling (7.365, n.1). Eventually published as *The New English*

Bible (1961), its prose style overseen by "the best scholars in the kingdom," the translation was reviewed by Eliot as "something which astonishes in its combination of the vulgar, the trivial and the pedantic" (8.530). He had no reservations earlier about voicing his response to the report of the Lambeth Conference of 1930, taking over 300 bishops to task over its weaknesses – the lack of spiritual direction and authority in matters of faith and morals, its problematic recommendations and resolutions, its verbiage, platitudes, pieties, and ambiguities – before boldly asserting that the Church should be moving in the Anglo-Catholic direction he preferred and supported: "I believe that in spite of the apparently insoluble problems with which it has to deal, the Church of England is strengthening its position as a branch of the Catholic Church, the Catholic Church in England" (4.238). Eliot gave "Thoughts after Lambeth" (1931) a permanent place in his canonical *Selected Essays* (1932). So when the next report of the Lambeth Conference appeared in 1948 he was even more unforgiving, taking 325 bishops of the global Anglican Communion to task in "Lambeth and Education: The Report Criticized." Writing expressly as a layman so as not to trespass on questions of doctrine and dogma and create a breach of peace, Eliot chooses to focus on the weakest aspect of the Report, clauses 27-35 of the section titled "*Education*," particularly clause 27:

> The Conference holds that the Church should press for the best educational opportunity everywhere for all, without racial distinction and without privilege for wealth.

Eliot reads the clause as a UNESCO-type declaration of worldwide aims that cannot be realized, "an inconvenient fact which is frequently passed over in our schemes":

> We incline to belittle the importance of those conditions which we cannot plan for or legislate into existence. Into "the best opportunity" there will also enter an element of the unplannable, the unpredictable, and so far as human designs go, the capricious.

He criticizes the bishops for their obscurity in referring to general education, religious education, and Christian education with no reference to specific Anglican education, as though they wish to avoid mentioning the differences between the Anglican and other Protestant educational beliefs. And he observes that, in the vagueness of their definition of the Church, and in addressing numerous matters outside their authority, they fail to speak

and give spiritual direction to the laity in their care. The weaknesses about education, he summarizes, "suggest certain questions about the conference as a whole, about its purpose, scope and methods which cannot be limited to its treatment of the subject of education" (7.347). Eliot's opportunity to answer the bishops on education, however, was not long in coming. When the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago invited him to give a set of four lectures at the University of Chicago in October 1950, his frustration with the Lambeth report may be one of the factors that determined his choice of subject, "The Aims of Education."[9] In the final lecture, "The Issue of Religion," Eliot explores at length "the place of religion in education, and that of the place of education in religion," concluding that "my main motive has been to unsettle your minds, rather than to impose a theory" (7.551, 563).

But Eliot's unstinting role as a Christian critic of the Church hierarchy, its conferences, proposals, and resolutions, was also that of the churchwarden, vicar's warden, and active layman in the service of his parish and Christian community. In 1948, as an honorary fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, Eliot was invited by the Master to give a Lenten sermon to the fellows. With deep misgivings as a layman about delivering a sermon on exercising Christian influence by example, he set out first to give them his conception of himself as a layman: "By a *Christian*, then, I mean a man who professes his adherence to a definite body of Christian believers; by a Christian *layman*, I mean . . . one who is not only a nominal member, but who recognizes a loyalty to that local congregation and place of worship, and who is willing and eager to serve them" (7.111-12). Eliot was indeed a devoted servant of St. Stephen's Church and its vicar, Father Eric Cheetham, as revealed in his tributes to him on his retirement (8.114) and on his death (8.330), but he was also in the service of the larger Anglican community of London and England whenever called upon.

One of those calls came in 1931 from his friend George Bell, the Lord Bishop of Chichester and former Dean of Canterbury Cathedral who would commission Eliot to write *Murder in the Cathedral* for performance there in 1935. As editor of the new *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, he asked Eliot to write an account of how he would direct Chichester Cathedral in a series titled "If I Were a Dean." Eliot had visited and taken notes on scores of cathedrals in France, Germany, and Italy during his year at the Sorbonne in 1910-11, and many English cathedrals after his arrival in 1914. While recognizing the primary use of a cathedral for worship and the continuity of the highest

liturgical standards, he had developed a striking vision of making each English cathedral more uniquely local and communal: "I prefer rather a church which shows the loving attempts of generation after generation, each according to its own notions of beauty, to leave visible testimony of its devotion. I should like to be able to encourage the best contemporary artists in stone, metal, paint and wood, to apply themselves to the decoration of my cathedral; and the best musicians to make music for its offices." And he would further encourage the writing and performance of religious drama "*within* the cathedral itself," asserting his strong belief that "everything that engages more individuals in the responsibility and pride of beautifying the church service, is an encouragement to the communal life" (4.297-98).

So, twenty years later, when the Friends of Chichester Cathedral invited him to return and address them in June 1951, he spoke on "The Value and Use of Cathedrals in England To-day," reaffirming, expanding, and qualifying his earlier wish to see cathedrals making use of the best living artists, musicians, writers, and craftsmen, now admitting that all their arts should be considered ancillary to worship, never distracting from it. "But when it is really good," he declares, "it seems to me that work by modern artists quickens devotional feeling. . . . Surely it is the great task of the religious artist, musician, and even the creative writer, to realise religious feeling in the terms of his own time" (7.735). But one of the main concerns of this talk received only a single sentence in 1931: that a Dean should have "sufficient continuous leisure to be able to apply himself to some considerable work of scholarship or of original theological and philosophical writing" (4.298). Over the years leisure had become an increasingly important aspect of Eliot's idea of culture, and he had become a frequent spokesman for increasing the leisure of clerics, stating in this 1951 talk his conviction that "civilisation depends upon the right people having the right leisure; . . . It is in the cathedrals that we ought to affirm the last stronghold of leisure, for the sake of scholarship and theology. The fruits of leisure seem to me so important, that it is worth while to accept the abuse of leisure by those who are negligent of their opportunity, in order to obtain the benefits of the work of those who employ it profitably" (7.736-37). In this regard he was indebted to his close friend Josef Pieper, a professor of philosophy at the University of Münster, where Eliot went to visit him during his German tour. Impressed by his writings on philosophy and culture, Eliot arranged for Alexander Dru to translate *Muße und Kult* (1948) and *Was heißt philosophieren?* (1948), combining the two essays in a Faber publication bearing Eliot's chosen English title, *Leisure the*

Basis of Culture (1952) (7.654). Eliot finished the draft of his introduction for the volume in May 1951, less than a month before delivering his lecture in Chichester Cathedral.

Another enduring commitment of Eliot's Christian service is manifest in the extent of his intellectual caritas in freely engaging in the support of charitable organizations from the 1930s to the late 1950s, following his return from America in 1933 and his separation from Vivien. Living alone in rooms in the presbytery of Father Eric Cheetham until 1940, boarding in the cottage of Mrs. Hope Mirrlees in Shamley Green until 1945, and sharing a London flat with John Hayward until 1957, he had free evenings and weekends to answer requests to speak and read at fund-raising events for numerous private charities, schools, hospitals, and church groups. These included Mary Trevelyan's International Student Service, St. Anne's Church House, the British Red Cross Society, the Save the Children fund, the Fitzroy Unemployed Women's Club, the London Diocesan Board of Women's Work, the Association of British University Women, wartime lectures for American soldiers, and BBC appeals for a community center in North Kensington and for the Testaccio Cemetery in Rome (7.353), to name a few. In June 1951 he spoke at a fund-raiser for Cecil Houses, which provides accommodation for elderly women, expressing his view that the needs of older people can be divided into two areas: "those who primarily need privacy at the end of their lives and those whose primary need is company," all of whom have a desire for independence that touches on self-respect. "I wish to make the point," he writes in extolling the necessity of charities, "simply that the sense of self-respect which everyone needs and has the right to is not necessarily preserved by abolishing 'charity' in favour of social 'service.' . . . What matters for the preservation of self-respect . . . is the relation between the person who gives and the person who receives; and it may be better to be looked after by people who care about us as individuals than by a State which does not" (7.649).

In his addresses to charitable societies, Eliot thought carefully about his audience and nearly always found some appropriate way of bringing into his remarks something personal about himself as a way of identifying with them. When in June 1952 he addressed the National Institute for the Blind in "Some Thoughts on Braille," he wanted them to know that as a writer "no demand gives me more pleasure than the request for permission to print one of my works in braille. It is a request any author should regard as a signal compliment." But he was interested in braille, he said, for a personal reason:

"I do not know whether the thought of possible blindness haunts other writers, but I know that it has always haunted me":

> That is why, if I were suddenly blinded . . . I should be thankful for the invention of braille. Whether at my age I could master it, I do not know; but the hope of mastering it would sustain me. For without being able to read, independent of others to read to me, I do not believe that I could write – or, in so far as I could write, I should be chiefly dependent upon my past reading during my years of vision. That is why I want the blind to be able to read for themselves, as well as to be read to. (7.753)

Eliot characteristically brought sympathy and encouragement to such addresses, but none of them was bruited about: only the inviters who were part of the charitable organizations and educational societies shared their knowledge of his generosity in these regards. He frequently handed his only copy to his host, leaving to him or her the decision to publish in the society newsletter or journal. His friend and fellow editor Philip Mairet was one of the few aware of Eliot's extraordinary personal outreach, of what Mairet called his "princely largesse to voluntary journalism as a cultural cause," but Mairet rightly feared that "this interest of Eliot's may not appeal to many, because it is not so easy to see the beauty of intellectual charity as of other kinds of charity, or to realize its irreplaceable importance if the springs of culture are not to dry up."[10] These little-known activities took place under the radar of his more publicly visible cultural writings, underneath his public presidencies of literary, cultural, and religious societies. In the midst of it all he was still a publisher who was building the great Faber list of poets, who had to solicit, receive, read, report on, write acceptances and rejections, pen blurbs, and see books through the press; still an author who had to write, submit copy, and read proofs. The massive correspondence shows that he lived several lives on several planes at once, much of it in a domestically tormented state. Eliot was in the world and of the world; he was not larger than life, but he lived life large – larger than we have known.

* * * *

On the other hand, Eliot worried about over-extending his presence in the public domain by sending letters to *The Times*, *The Church Times*, and other papers too frequently; by signing his name to numerous multiple-author letters in support of various civic causes; and by sending letters of encouragement to new periodicals and theatrical companies for printing in

their announcements and programs. While he was now reviewing fewer books, he was writing more introductions, prefaces, and forewords to books than at any time in his career: for Charles Williams's novel *All Hallows' Eve*; for an exhibition of Joyce's work; for collections of religious essays; for critical studies of Michael Roberts, D. H. Lawrence, Shakespeare, and the poetry of England and France; for an English edition of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; and for Simone Weil's *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties towards Mankind*, a book Eliot found so intimidating that he wrote to Herbert Read on 21 March 1951: "a preface or introduction to a book by Simone is about the most serious job of the kind that one could undertake. One is so impressed by this terrifying woman that one wants to do something that at least would not risk her disapproval of it."[11] Months later, on 21 November, he wrote to the Dean of Chichester: "I have had, for one reason or another, to write several prefaces this year, and they have, all in all, considerably interrupted my own work. Each of these tasks takes me a great deal more time than I dare say most people would have to give to them. I am a slow worker. Furthermore, I feel that I ought to reserve my prefaces to books for which I am obviously the most suitable introducer. It is rather like letters to *The Times*: if one writes too many, people pay little attention to what one has to say."

By 1951 the sequence of illnesses, surgeries, years of smoking, recent bouts of bronchitis, an operation for hemorrhoids, a mild heart attack after returning from Chicago, and the toil of work had taken a visible toll on Eliot's appearance, most graphically described by the American poet Donald Hall on his first meeting with Eliot in his Russell Square office:

> Eliot was only sixty-three, in the autumn of 1951, but he looked at least seventy-five. . . . His face was pale as baker's bread. He stooped as he sat at his desk, and when he stood he slouched like the witch in the gingerbread house. His head shook forward slightly, from time to time, almost as if he nodded toward sleep. He smoked, and between inhalations he hacked a dry, deathly, smoker's hack. His speech – while precise, exact, perfect – was slow to move, as if he stood behind the boulder of each word, pushing it into view. Eliot was *cadaverous*, in 1951.[12]

Nonetheless, Eliot was still in possession of his critical and creative powers, in the midst of writing major canonical essays, most of which were first prepared as invited lectures for honorary degree ceremonies, anniversary events, named lectureships, and broadcasts. He had behind him "Milton II,"

written for the British Academy in 1947; "Poetry and Drama," originally "Poetry in the Theatre," written for his British Council trip to Rome in 1947, before revision as "The Aims of Poetic Drama" and final revision as "Poetry and Drama," delivered at Harvard, after the loss of another close friend, as the inaugural Theodore Spencer Memorial Lecture in 1950; "Edgar Poe et la France," written for the degree ceremony at Aix-en-Provence in 1948; "From Poe to Valéry," for the Library of Congress in 1948; "Talk on Dante [What Dante Means to Me]," for the Italian Institute in London in 1950 (later returning to receive the Dante Gold Medal); "The Aims of Education," for the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago in 1950; and "Virgil and the Christian World," for a BBC broadcast in 1951. He had before him "Le Dilemme poétique" ("Scylla and Charybdis"), delivered in Nice in 1952; "American Literature and the American Language," for the centenary of Washington University, St. Louis, in 1953; and "The Three Voices of Poetry" for the annual lecture of the National Book League in 1953. This lecture, the last work in the volume, was delivered before an audience of 2,500, "and they remained silent throughout," Harold Nicolson wrote in his diary: "The lecture takes place in Central Hall [Westminster], and I have never seen such a crowd for any literary lecture. . . . I am on the platform and Norman Birkett takes the chair. Tom talks about his Three Voices . . . He has much to say that is new. He says that for him inspiration is like matter that must be expelled . . . in the form of a poem."[13]

Eight of these essays were placed in the canon of his collected editions: "Milton II," "Poetry and Drama," "Virgil and the Christian World," and "The Three Voices of Poetry" in *On Poetry and Poets* (1957); "From Poe to Valéry," "What Dante Means to Me," "The Aims of Education," and "American Literature and the American Language" in *To Criticize the Critic* (1965). Meanwhile, Eliot's Nobel Prize had generated the Faber publication of the third English edition of *Selected Essays* (1951), still the standard edition today. It was enlarged by five carefully selected essays written after the first edition in 1932, with Eliot's explanation in the introduction that "any literary essays which are not to be found in it must abide their collection into another book. . . . For myself, this book is a kind of historical record of my interests and opinions" (7.493). With Eliot's approval, John Hayward was in the process of collecting extracts from those abiding literary essays and social criticism in a Penguin edition of *Selected Prose* (1953), its first printing of 40,000 copies a testament to the rising demand by general readers for

Eliot's prose writings. In his introduction, Hayward quotes a sentence from Eliot's essay on Matthew Arnold (1933) as indicative of Eliot's own critical method and achievement: "From time to time . . . it is desirable that some critic shall appear to review the past of our literature, and set the poets and the poems in a new order" (4.657). "Such critics are rare," Hayward remarks, "for they must possess, in addition to an unusual capacity for judgement, an independence of mind powerful enough to recognize and to interpret for their generation its own values and categories of appreciation. Matthew Arnold was such a critic, as were Coleridge and Johnson and Dryden before him; and such, in our own day, is Mr Eliot himself."[14]

By 1953 Eliot's preoccupation with definitions of culture and education began to subside, but not before taking a parting shot at his cultural bête noire, UNESCO – not at the architecture of its declarations and resolutions but at the architecture of its headquarters building in Paris – writing to *The Times* on 4 November 1952 that the unsightly design was not only incongruous with the skyline of New York: it would be "still more incongruous with the architecture of Paris," and "should be as unwelcome to lovers of Paris, the world over, as the model is stated to have been to the sites committee of the prefecture of the Seine" (7.763).[15] In other matters, having weathered the Bollingen episode, Eliot's painful impasse with Emily Hale over the possibility of marriage had stabilized into an ongoing friendship and correspondence. In January 1950 she attended the Broadway opening of *The Cocktail Party* and sent him a congratulatory cable in South Africa, where he was vacationing with Geoffrey and Enid Faber. On 9 July Eliot wrote to her Aunt Edith that Emily was coming to London "and will come to the *Cocktail Party* with me; and I look forward to some outings with her next week." On 29 July 1953, while *The Confidential Clerk* was in rehearsal for the August opening at the Edinburgh Festival, Eliot wrote to director Martin Browne that it would be attended by Miss Hale, "(for whom Miss Fletcher has succeeded in getting a grand circle seat for the opening night also)." Miss Fletcher was Valerie Fletcher, whom he had hired as his secretary in 1949, and who would become his second wife in 1957. As these domestic developments and new bouts of illness worked their way forward, there was no break in the momentum or force of the multiform prose yet to come, nothing to displace his achieved position at the center of culture as he continued to impress his imagination and visions of communal life on every corner of a European society.

NOTES

1. Robert Sencourt, *T. S. Eliot: A Memoir* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1971), 197.

2. Lyndall Gordon, *T. S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life* (New York & London: W. W. Norton, 1998), 411-12.

3. Eliot quotes Article I from the draft constitution published in the *Times Educational Supplement* of 4 Aug 1945 (365), to be discussed at a conference in London, 1-15 Nov. On 27 Oct, the paper announced the forthcoming "momentous conference," leading Eliot to write of his "misgiving" to the editor in the issue of 10 Nov: "it is that neither in the official document convening the conference (which you published some little time ago), nor in any notice in the Press, have I seen any suggestion that the term *cultural* needs to be defined. The first task of a cultural organization should be to consider how far 'culture' is susceptible of 'organization'; and this question is peculiarly urgent at a time when the cultural organisms of Europe are either destroyed or in process of destruction. The opportunities for getting lost in a verbal labyrinth without issue, when the representatives of 37 nations have assembled to draw conclusions from unexamined premises, are unlimited" (6.696).

4. W. B. Yeats, *The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W. B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 259-60.

5. Gordon, *T. S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life*, 413.

6. See "The Literature of Fascism" (1928) (3.540); "Mr. Barnes and Mr. Rowse" (1929) (3.657); "Christianity and Communism" (1932) (4.422).

7. Eliot also used the *Criterion* as an analogue or model for cultural unity in "Literature," a broadcast-essay contributed to a BBC Foreign Service series titled "The Unity of European Culture" (1953). Writing on the unity of European literature, he refers to editing the literary review, "whose main *raison d'être* was to stimulate the circulation of ideas, to arouse attention to whatever new and significant, in poetry and prose, was coming into existence in other countries as well as my own. To me, the unity of European literature has always seemed a self-evident *necessity*: to me, the rapid circulation throughout Europe of the best that was being thought and written in each country of Europe has seemed as essential for the continued life of literature as is the function of breathing for the life of a human being" (7.812).

8. Eliot had written of Goethe in "Shelley and Keats" (1933): "Of Goethe perhaps it is truer to say that he dabbled in both philosophy and poetry and made no great success of either; his true role was that of the man of the world and sage" (4.649).

9. In the opening lecture – "Can 'Education' Be Defined?" – Eliot identifies a more immediate motivation for the topic – an article by University of Chicago chancellor Robert M. Hutchins, "T. S. Eliot and Education," in which he criticized Eliot's chapter on education in *NTDC*. In an undated letter to Eliot, Hutchins stated that the article "will have served its purpose if it prompts you to elaborate your views." Eliot replied on 21 Feb 1950: "This is not to say that I quite accept your views either, but merely to thank you for the first stimulating comments I have received" (see 7.564, n.5).

10. Philip Mairet, "Memories of TSE," in *T. S. Eliot: A Symposium for his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Neville Braybrooke (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1958), 42.

11. As reported in the *Times* of 6 May 1958, under the heading "Simone Weil," Leslie Paul announced that on learning in 1957 that, following her death in 1943, Weil was buried in an unmarked common grave in Ashford New Cemetery, he formed a small committee, of which

Eliot was a member, to purchase a grave and erect a headstone: "To-day the committee and its supporters marked this happy end to their labours by a visit of homage to Simone Weil's graveside where a few passages from her works were read and flowers were strewn" (11).

12. Donald Hall, *Remembering Poets: Reminiscences and Opinions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 88.

13. Harold Nicolson, *Diaries and Letters, 1945-1962*, ed. Nigel Nicolson (London: Collins, 1968), 249.

14. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Prose*, ed. John Hayward (London: Penguin Books, 1953), 7. Hayward, long a champion of Eliot's prose, had published an earlier selection of representative passages in *Points of View*, by T. S. Eliot (London: Faber, 1941), as a general introduction to his work in prose. Through his own literary, bibliographical, and publishing connections, Hayward was instrumental in securing invitations to Eliot for introductions to books and exhibitions, including the introduction to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as a board member of the Cresset Press (7.509, n.1), and Eliot's speech at the opening of Le Livre anglais exhibition in Paris as an organizer of the exhibition (7.646, n.10).

15. The proposed design was rejected as unsightly by the sites committee of the City of Paris and by the French Government. A newly designed building was eventually constructed between 1953 and 1958 in Place de Fontenoy.

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EDITORIAL PROCEDURES AND PRINCIPLES

I. PUBLISHED PROSE

Criteria for Inclusion

Eliot's uncollected prose makes up the vast majority of the writings published in his lifetime and spans the period from his stories in the *Smith Academy Record* in 1905 to his final autobiographical note for the *Harvard College Class of 1910: Fifty-fifth Anniversary Report*, contributed in late December 1964, shortly before his death on 4 January 1965. These writings include hundreds of reviews and essays contributed to periodicals; commentaries in the *Criterion*; letters to the press (printed here and in the *Letters*; in each place they appear in different contexts of personal letters and public prose, thereby inviting separate readings and annotation); lectures and addresses published separately in wrappers or in boards; introductions, prefaces, and forewords to books and to translations of his works in foreign languages; testimonials and other contributions to domestic and foreign newspapers; and public broadcasts published or excerpted in the *Listener*. Beginning with volume 5, the increasing numbers of published items unrecorded in the Gallup bibliography are identified in the Contents with a diamond (♦).

By the mid-1930s, Eliot began to receive numerous invitations to give Prize Day speeches to secondary schools and addresses to and in support of various societies, charities, and churches. He often gave the only copy of his typescript to his hosts, who published or summarized the texts in their school magazines, newsletters, or local newspapers, most of which remained bibliographically unrecorded. Some of these typescripts and printed texts have been recovered; other typescripts have been lost, or the addresses were made from notes and outlines afterward discarded. But, in many instances, a staff member, or a reporter from a local paper, was present to write a report, often with substantial quotations, at times seemingly with Eliot's text in hand. These firsthand reports of addresses and lectures have been included in Part II, "Transcripts and Summary Reports of Lectures," as valuable records of Eliot's little-known secondary intellectual life in his cultural domain.

Among his own letters to the press are those of which he was a signatory with one or more others. His role in the authorship is often uncertain, but his growing support of public appeals, causes, and concerns is of permanent

interest. Such signed letters, which continue to appear in significant numbers in volume 7, are collected and chronologically included in Part II, "Signed Letters and Documents with Multiple Authorship."

Chronology

With a few exceptions, the editors have arranged the majority of Eliot's unpublished and published prose writings in the original order of composition or publication to allow the reader to follow closely his developing patterns of thought as he immersed himself in intellectual journalism and literary criticism from year to year, decade to decade. The primary volumes of collected essays, together with their prefaces and introductions, have been disassembled and their contents returned to chronological order alongside the uncollected and unpublished prose.

Less than 10 percent of Eliot's prose writings underwent textual changes when they were reprinted or collected; most pieces were never revisited after their first publication in periodical and other forms. Some reviews and essays, however, particularly those included in *The Sacred Wood*, were combined and revised by Eliot as new essays: successively published reviews of books on Ben Jonson in November 1919, on Philip Massinger in May-June 1920, and on Swinburne and others in the two-part "The Perfect Critic" in July 1920. The original reviews were redacted as such and included in the volume under the first title of each pair. He collapsed three other reviews published between September and December 1919 under the title "Imperfect Critics" for the volume. Moreover, "Eeldrop and Appleplex" and "Tradition and the Individual Talent," both originally published in two separate parts months apart, have been combined into single pieces. In such uncharacteristic cases, we have sacrificed adherence to chronology in order to present the complete texts, but not without indicating the separate chronological positions and titles and recording significant textual changes.

A few other considerations have led us to relax the chronological order of publication in specific instances, including Eliot's doctoral dissertation on F. H. Bradley, a draft of which was completed and approved in 1916 but not edited and published until 1964. The editors have placed this lengthy work neither intrusively into the published reviews of 1916, nor awkwardly out of context in 1964, but logically at the end of the graduate essays of 1913-15, essays that led to and were organically drawn upon for the dissertation. In presenting a corrected, re-edited, and more

readable critical text in that position, the editors have drawn upon the original dissertation typescript, the proofs and correspondence of the suppressed first printing (1963), and the proofs and text of the 1964 edition.

The three volumes of university lectures – *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, *After Strange Gods, The Idea of a Christian Society* – as well as *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, have been kept intact and edited as the coherent, self-contained works that they were intended to be; however, when individual lectures were published separately, the publication data and any alterations are recorded in the textual notes. The Clark Lectures (1926) and Turnbull Lectures (1933), edited and published together posthumously as *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry* (1993), have also been kept intact, each re-edited and included separately and chronologically in respective volumes. The dates of composition of individual reviews, essays, and lectures are given when they are known.

In volume 4 (1930-1933), the chronology has been altered to present together the majority of Eliot's lectures in America as the Charles Eliot Norton Professor at Harvard during the 1932-33 academic year. These include his Norton and Turnbull lectures and individual lectures written for delivery at numerous American institutions, together with the editorial reconstruction of five lectures destroyed before his return to England in June 1933. The unit is preceded by a separate "Chronology of Lectures and Readings." Those lectures that were not published until later in 1933 have been arranged by date of delivery, with subsequent publication information given in the notes. Eliot's Page-Barbour lectures, however, delivered at the University of Virginia in May 1933 but substantially revised before publication as *After Strange Gods* in 1934, appear in accordance with their publication date in volume 5 (1934-1939).

Standardization of Formats

Eliot's prose in little magazines and periodicals appears under a variety of house styles: the divergent formats, typography, spacing, and indents for paragraphs and set-off quotations have all been standardized. As the bibliographical descriptions and kinds of information provided for books under review also varied considerably from periodical to periodical, these descriptions have been standardized in the heading, as have the descriptions and dates of the periodicals in which the reviews first appeared. Unsigned reviews and essays are indicated as such in the heading or in an initial note;

all opening and closing signatures – signed or initialed – and pseudonyms are placed at the right margin at the end of the text.

Titles

Before 1919, many of Eliot's reviews were untitled; thereafter, most were titled unless they appeared as part of a "Commentary" in the *Criterion*. Since many reviews were given their titles by the editors of the periodicals in which they appeared, and since Eliot and his editors occasionally changed the titles of those essays that he chose to collect in book form, the editors have provided Eliot's final title ("Hamlet"), with the first and American titles ("Hamlet and his Problems") given in the notes. Titles of reviews, and titles under which Eliot's letters to editors of periodicals and newspapers appeared, were presumably supplied by his editors but are retained for ease of recognition.

Errors in Eliot's Published Prose

In the published prose, errors often appeared as a result of authorial carelessness or a typesetter's mistake. In small matters, such as a misspelling or an obvious typographical error, we have silently corrected the error. Larger matters, such as missing words, have been resolved through the use of editorial brackets or explanatory notes.

Mistranscriptions of Quoted Prose

Under pressure to meet deadlines, Eliot frequently made transcription errors when quoting passages of prose from other authors. His editors were often inattentive to these matters, and frequently did not arrange for him to read proof. Thus, the editors of the present edition have silently restored dropped words, supplied missing ellipses, added overlooked italics and quotation marks, and placed capitals made from lowercase letters in brackets. More substantial alterations are indicated in the textual notes. Eliot often provided selected page numbers for prose quotations in parentheses in the texts; when he did not do so, the editors have supplied missing numbers in brackets in the texts and in parentheses in the notes.

Misquotations of Poetry

When minor transcription errors occur in lines or passages of poetry quoted directly from a volume under review, they are silently corrected. However, some of Eliot's misquotations are more slips of memory than

mistranscriptions. Such misquotations are preserved in the text and corrected in the notes. In some instances, the misquotations affect the commentary, and in every instance, it is of interest to observe how Eliot held certain passages of poetry, especially from Dante and Shakespeare, in memory and summoned them spontaneously for unchecked use. Frank Kermode, editor of Eliot's *Selected Prose* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), took pains to point out such misquotations in Eliot's essays, "not from pedantry, but from a conviction that in the poet Eliot misquotation is sometimes creative" (307).

American / English Punctuation Practice

From 1909 through the preface to the second edition (1928) of *The Sacred Wood*, all of Eliot's prose was printed in what is now called American punctuation style, with double inverted commas for quotations, punctuation inside quotation marks. English periodicals such as the *Egoist*, the *Athenaeum*, the *Nation*, the *New Statesmen*, the *Bookman*, the *Spectator*, the *TLS*, and others that printed Eliot's work used this common style. From the publication of *For Lancelot Andrewes* in 1928, however, all of the Faber editions of his collected essays were printed in English punctuation style, with single inverted commas, punctuation outside (inconsistently so). In editing the *Criterion*, Eliot followed the American style from 1922 to 1926, when it shifted to English style, with punctuation inconsistently inside and outside quotations. Many English periodicals, particularly those published jointly in America, continued to use the American style, and Eliot continued to publish unreprinted essays in American periodicals. Moreover, the American editions of his work systematically converted the Faber editions to American style. In an attempt to achieve uniformity and minimize error, the editors of this edition, in consultation with the publishers and the Eliot Estate, follow the American style throughout. The earlier Faber policy of italicizing all set-off quotations in Eliot's texts has not been followed.

Translations

A number of Eliot's essays and prefaces were commissioned for a foreign audience, translated, and published only in foreign translation. The translation and the English original are both included when possible. If the original English text has not been recovered, an English translation is provided. When an English text first published in translation was revised before publication in English, the substantive alterations are noted.

Annotations

Eliot's works were translated into thirty-eight languages in his lifetime, and his writings continue to attract a worldwide readership. In annotating this edition, the editors aim to serve scholars, students, and modern readers who come to Eliot's prose from numerous languages, backgrounds, and fields of interest – not only in literary criticism but in economics, education, philosophy, politics, theology, cultural theory, popular culture, and other disciplines. Eliot was reluctant to collect much of his prose because he felt that many of his remarks, originally composed under the pressure of deadlines, would need qualification, clarification, and correction. We have attempted to create notes that will enhance and clarify his highly referential prose, and have been mindful of both the immediate and the larger intellectual context of his writings: we draw upon his correspondence and manuscripts; where no source is given, it may be assumed that the original letter, manuscript, or carbon copy is in the collection of the Eliot Estate or at the Faber and Faber archive. When it is helpful, we make cross-references to earlier and later comments. We have attempted to identify every specific literary and nonliterary allusion; to trace all references to newspapers, periodicals, and other documents; and to identify the books and editions that he employed. As part of our larger aim to illuminate the breadth of Eliot's learning and the depths of recall that inform and enrich the texture of his critical prose, we have noted relevant inscriptions and markings in his personal copies. Eliot's own notes are indicated with an asterisk (*) after the superscript number; notes that include textual variants are indicated with a dagger (†) after the superscript.

II. UNPUBLISHED PROSE

Much of Eliot's prose was written not for publication but for reading or broadcasting to specific audiences on particular occasions: philosophical essays for postgraduate seminars, tutorials, and philosophical societies at Harvard, Oxford, and Cambridge; addresses as president of the Alliance française, London Library, Virgil Society, Books Across the Sea, Académie septentrionale, and other organizations; responses as recipient of honorary degrees, medals, and other honors; remarks at the opening of exhibitions and conferences; and appeals in aid of civic and charitable causes. Eliot chose to put these items aside as ephemeral materials in the life of a man of letters. Because of the scholarly interest and biographical richness that they contain, they are included, with thanks to Mrs. Eliot, in this edition. More than one hundred unpublished items, all of which

are identified as such, are incorporated chronologically into the individual volumes of *The Complete Prose*. The first is an undergraduate essay, "The Defects of Kipling," written at Harvard in March 1909, and the last a telegram, "Tribute to John F. Kennedy," read by Jacqueline Kennedy at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., on 25 November 1964.

The early philosophical essays exist in pencil or ink manuscripts and in typescripts with holograph emendations. After Eliot left graduate school, he composed nearly all of his work on a typewriter, with frequent typeovers (xxxxx) and holograph corrections and insertions. On some occasions, his first wife, Vivien, or a secretary, typed his drafts. The BBC usually retyped his broadcast scripts, which often contain last-minute emendations. In editing the large variety of Eliot's unpublished writings, we attempt to present texts that are as accurate, clear, and readable as possible, with a minimum of emendation. To distinguish them from published writings, the editors have preserved some of the physical characteristics of the manuscripts (such as underlinings), choosing not to regularize them as published items lest they lose all the visual character of their composition. Previously unpublished texts are identified in the Contents with a star (⋆) and are introduced in the volume by headnotes that provide the occasion, date, place, and context of their preparation and presentation. The location and physical description of the manuscripts are usually given in the textual notes, especially when a fuller description is required. In some instances, such information is more logically placed in the headnotes or ordinary notes. When no source is given, it may be assumed that the original or carbon is in the collection of the Eliot Estate or in the Faber and Faber archive.

Eliot's unpublished texts are edited according to the following additional principles:

- False starts and insignificant deletions are excised, but ~~strikeouts~~, when illuminating or clarifying, are retained or given in notes.
- Typed or holograph underlinings for emphasis have been retained; occasional red ribbon color changes, an alternate method of emphasizing words and phrases, are represented in bold; underlined titles and foreign words are italicized; unpunctuated or mispunctuated titles of books, plays, and poems are corrected and standardized.
- Abbreviated titles, names, and places are expanded, as are ampersands, but his occasional uses of cf., i.e., e.g., sc., passim, etc., have been retained, unitalicized.

Obvious typographical errors have been silently corrected; readings of illegible words are followed by a bracketed question mark [?]; most compound adjectives (seventeenth-century poetry) are hyphenated, consistent with his ordinary practice.

Eliot's variant spellings – British, American, period (to-day), alternate (behoves) – are retained; opening and/or closing inverted commas (quotation marks) have been supplied where Eliot has overlooked them; inconsistent placement of punctuation inside and outside inverted commas is standardized; missing accents and diacriticals are supplied.

When the volume and/or page numbers for a quotation are given by Eliot in the margin or in the text, the numbers are placed in parentheses at the end of the quotation or in the notes; when editorially supplied, they are placed in brackets.

Clearly superfluous or unintended punctuation (commas before parentheses), and some unintended double punctuation (;–) have been deleted or corrected. Where the omission of punctuation causes confusion, it has been supplied; when, in Eliot's hand, the use of a semicolon or colon is unclear, the editors have interpreted the punctuation in terms of clarity and grammatical structure.

Eliot's substantive marginal comments related to the text but not part of the body of the text are quoted and noted where they occur. When Eliot makes marginal statements with lines drawn for insertion in the text during the process of composition, they are identified in the notes. When it is clear that Eliot has made insertions from the margin or an appended page *after* the body of the text was drafted or completed, as in his essay on "A Neglected Aspect of Chapman" in volume 2, they are introduced into the text with a bracketed and italicized phrase, [*insertion*:] or [*appended insertion*:], with the end of the insertion similarly indicated [*end insertion*]. His occasional notes and outlines on the verso of a page are recorded in the textual notes.

III. FUTURE EDITIONS

The contents of this edition, which are presented in eight separate volumes, are enhanced by the inclusion of more than two hundred published items that are not recorded in the Gallup bibliography. As extensive as our collection efforts have been, we are confident that fugitive items will be

found, and we encourage readers to submit them for inclusion in the edition, which is managed and maintained by Johns Hopkins University Press. A future digital platform will ensure that *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot* is a living edition, with the capacity to include newly discovered prose items, to correct errors, and to provide more illustrations and digital innovations for readers than would be possible in a print edition. To place Eliot's primary prose before scholars and readers expeditiously, the editors include only those writings in this first edition. Eventually, however, a wide range of secondary prose materials will be available, including (1) additional juvenilia; (2) "Foreign Exchanges," Eliot's monthly articles for *Lloyds Bank Monthly*, 1923-25; (3) unpublished personal notes and notes from student classes; (4) interviews; (5) unpublished book reports for Faber and Faber; (6) blurbs and endorsements; (7) outlines of informal talks; and (8) Eliot's translations of works by other authors, primarily for publication in the *Criterion.* As additional resources become accessible, we envision a website that contains both an increasingly comprehensive and accurate critical edition and an invaluable repository of prose materials for researchers and readers in a new digital age of Eliot studies.

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ABBREVIATIONS

PUBLISHED WORKS BY T. S. ELIOT

ASG	*After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934).
CPP	*The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969).
EAM	*Essays Ancient and Modern* (London: Faber & Faber, 1936).
EE	*Elizabethan Essays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934).
FLA	*For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928).
HJD	*Homage to John Dryden: Three Essays on Poetry of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hogarth Press, 1924).
ICS	*The Idea of a Christian Society* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939).
IMH	*Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917*, ed. Christopher Ricks (London: Faber & Faber, 1996).
KE	*Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley* (London: Faber & Faber, 1964).
L1	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 1: 1898-1922, revised edn., ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (London: Faber & Faber, 2009).
L2	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 2: 1923-1925, ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (London: Faber & Faber, 2009).
L3	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 3: 1926-1927, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2012).
L4	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 4: 1928-1929, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2013).
L5	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 5: 1930-1931, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2014).
L6	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 6: 1932-1933, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2016).
L7	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 7: 1934-1936, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2017).

NTDC	*Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1962).
OPP	*On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber & Faber, 1957).
Poems1	*The Poems of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 1, ed. Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; London: Faber & Faber, 2015).
Poems2	*The Poems of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 2, ed. Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; London: Faber & Faber, 2015).
SE	*Selected Essays*, 3rd edn. (London: Faber & Faber, 1951).
SW	*The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1920).
TCC	*To Criticize the Critic* (London: Faber & Faber, 1965).
UPUC	*The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, 2nd edn. (London: Faber & Faber, 1964).
VMP	*The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, ed. Ronald Schuchard (London: Faber & Faber, 1993; New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994).
WLF	*The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts*, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber & Faber, 1971; New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971).

PERIODICALS

NEW	*The New English Weekly*
NRF	*La Nouvelle Revue française*
TES	*The Times Educational Supplement*
TLS	*The Times Literary Supplement*

OTHER WORKS

DC1	*The Inferno of Dante*, Temple Classics edn., trans. John Aitken Carlyle (London: J. M. Dent, 1909).
DC2	*The Purgatorio of Dante*, Temple Classics edn., trans. Thomas Okey (London: J. M. Dent, 1910).
DC3	*The Paradiso of Dante*, Temple Classics edn., trans. Philip H. Wicksteed (London: J. M. Dent, 1910).
Gallup	Donald Gallup, *T. S. Eliot: A Bibliography*, revised & extended edn. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969).

KJV	King James Version of the Bible
Lives	Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, Chandos Classics, new edn. (London: Frederick Warne, 1872).
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. John Simpson and Edmund Weiner. 20 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

Beinecke	The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University
Berg	Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, New York Public Library
Bonn	Bonn University Library
Brotherton	Brotherton Library, Leeds University
Dublin	University College Dublin Library
Harvard	University Archives, Harvard University
Houghton	The Houghton Library, Harvard University
King's	Modern Archive Centre, King's College, Cambridge
Lilly	Lilly Library, University of Indiana
Marbach	Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach
McKeldrin	McKeldrin Library, University of Maryland
Ransom	Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin
Reading	Reading University Library
Victoria	University of Victoria Library

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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The COMPLETE PROSE *of*
T. S. Eliot

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PART I

Essays, Reviews, Addresses, and Public Letters

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"Prufrock and Raskolnikov Again: A Letter from Eliot"

American Literature, 18 (Jan 1947) [319]-21

Professor John C. Pope, author of the above entry under "Notes and Queries," writes: "Mr. T. S. Eliot has supplied me with some important corrections for my article, 'Prufrock and Raskolnikov,' which appeared in *American Literature*, XVII, 213-230 (November, 1945). I was wrong in attributing the resemblances between 'Prufrock' and *Crime and Punishment* to Mrs. Garnett's translation, and in supposing as a consequence that the poem had been composed (I rashly said 'conceived') after October, 1914. The actual details are of such interest that I have secured Mr. Eliot's permission to quote his account in full, from a letter of March 8, 1946":[1]

> I have never read Mrs. Garnett's translation of *Crime and Punishment*. The poem of Prufrock was conceived some time in 1910. I think that when I went to Paris in the autumn of that year I had already written several fragments which were ultimately embodied in the poem, but I cannot at this distance remember which. I think that the passage beginning "I am not Prince Hamlet," a passage showing the influence of Laforgue, was one of these fragments which I took with me, but the poem was not completed until the summer of 1911. During the period of my stay in Paris, Dostoevsky was very much a subject of interest amongst literary people and it was my friend and tutor, Alain Fournier, who introduced me to this author.[2] Under his instigation, I read *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, and *The Brothers Karamazov* in the French translation during the course of that winter. These three novels made a very profound impression on me and I had read them all before *Prufrock* was completed, so I think you have established very conclusively the essentials of your case, and the only red herring that led you astray was that I could only have read *Crime and Punishment* in Mrs. Garnett's translation!
>
> Conrad Aiken's statement of trying unsuccessfully to place *Prufrock* in London in 1914 is quite correct.[3] This would have been the spring of 1914. I had had the poem by me, therefore, unpublished for three years. Indeed, as I remember it was only with great difficulty that Ezra Pound

finally persuaded Miss Harriet Monroe to accept the poem for *Poetry Chicago*, in 1915.[4]

NOTES

1. TSE wrote to John C. Pope (1904-97) of Yale University on 17 Apr 1946: "I have your letter of March 30 and you have my full permission to quote my letter in the letter to the editor of *American Literature* which you enclose. I only query one point. I no longer possess the French translations of Dostoevsky which I had at the time but my impression is that the three volumes were translated by two persons. At any rate, I seem to remember that the names of two translators were mentioned. I think this must have been a different set of translations from those of Victor Derély whom you mention. During the winter of 1910 there was a production of a dramatic version of *Les Frères Karamazov* at the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier under the direction of Jacques Copeau" (Yale).

2. John C. Pope's note: "For Alain Fournier's interest in Dostoevski between 1909 and 1911, see Jacques Rivière and Alain Fournier, *Correspondance, 1905-1914* (Paris: Éd. de la Nouvelle Revue Française, 1926-1928), IV, 84f., 114, 128f. ('Depuis Claudel, aucun livre ne m'a rapproché du christianisme comme *l'Idiot*'), and passim"([319)].

3. Pope's note: "*Harvard Advocate*, CXXV (Dec 1938), 17" ([319)].

4. Pope concludes: "Fortunately, although Mr. Eliot's letter gives *Crime and Punishment* a somewhat less decisive position in the history of 'Prufrock' than I was tempted to imagine, it testifies generously to the prominence of Dostoevski in his mind during the period of composition. What is especially welcome is its authoritative account of the growth of an important poem. This account modifies very helpfully Mr. H. R. Williamson's statement . . . that the poem was composed in 1910 [*The Poetry of T. S. Eliot* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932), 61], and reveals with what surprising rapidity it developed from the brief beginnings that can be observed in the poem 'Spleen,' first published in the *Harvard Advocate* for January, 1910" (321). For "Spleen," see *Poems1*, 239.

Professor Karl Mannheim

The Times (25 Jan 1947) 7

It would be impossible to improve upon your obituary notice of Professor Karl Mannheim, within the limits which your correspondent has set himself.[1] There is however one piece of testimony which I should like to add, as it will otherwise escape the appreciation of posterity, however attentively his books may be read in the future. This concerns the remarkable influence which Mannheim had come to exercise, within the short period of his residence in this country, upon men of his own generation, not all engaged in the same studies, who had the benefit of his acquaintance. In informal discussion among a small group, he gained an ascendancy for which he never sought, but which was, on the contrary, imposed upon him by the eagerness of others to listen to what he had to say. His interests were so wide as to touch those of men practising a variety of intellectual activities; his personal charm, and his kindly curiosity in human beings, drew such associations closer. In conversation, he was never desirous to impose a doctrine, but always primarily to state a problem and to elicit the reflections of his auditory. In consequence, his talk was always a stimulant to original thought; and many must be aware of a debt to him, whose points of view are very different from his, and whose indebtedness will not be immediately apparent to those who will know both Mannheim and his friends only through their published works.[2]

NOTES

1. The obituary of the Hungarian-born German sociologist Karl Mannheim (1893-1947), who died on 9 Jan, appeared in the *Times* of 11 Jan 1947 under the title "Professor Karl Mannheim / Education and Planned Society" (7). TSE wrote to Mrs. Mannheim on 21 Jan: "I wrote a short letter to *The Times* to supplement their excellent notice with something more personal." Mannheim left Germany in 1933 and settled in Britain, where he was appointed a lecturer in sociology at the London School of Economics. He was a prominent member of the Moot, a Christian think tank that focused on the role of culture in society, and was closely associated with TSE during this time. TSE defined him as "one of the most distinguished of living sociologists" in his review of *Man and Society* (1940) (6.74) and acknowledged a debt to his writings in the introduction to *NTDC* (7.195).

2. In "The Germanisation of Britain" (1945), TSE had discussed the nature of his debt to Mannheim in these terms: "I believe that I have myself found German thought of inestimable

value, simply because I tend to disagree with it violently; and it therefore forces me to think violently in order to discover the grounds of my disagreement. No contemporary thinker has more enriched my mental life in this way than Dr. Mannheim, to whom I feel I owe a considerable debt" (6.603). TSE wrote to Adolf Löwe on 8 July 1947: "His death in January came as a great shock. I was in hospital at the time and did not know of it for two or three days. I miss him very much both as a friend and as an intellectual force. He was one of those rare writers whose views are almost more stimulating to one's own thought when one disagrees with them though on the other hand I know that I have profited and been deeply influenced by his thinking."

In a letter of 11 Apr 1949, he replied to J. H. Oldham's request for a reminiscence of Mannheim: "At the Moot . . . he was a brilliant expositor of ideas: what made his conversation so impressive was, to me, the relation between his ideas and his personality. I mean that his thought was real, because it was the expression of an interior debate in his own mind and heart. It always seemed to me that the mind of Mannheim was devoted to order, to system, to the effort to bring their responsible conflicts of society within the control of reason; whereas his heart was devoted to freedom and tolerance; and that the development of his thought was a continuous effort to reconcile these two directions. Hence his thinking had the mark of sincerity: he was trying to solve problems because it was necessary for his own life to solve them, not trying primarily to convince others, or to compel admiration by the mere demonstration of a flawless argument. . . . I thought he had the gifts of sympathy; that he was a man who had suffered without being soured – and that his own misfortunes and difficulties had rather developed his ability to suffer for others and for society."

"Lord Bishops"

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (11 Apr 1947) 5

Sir, – Now that the more important knots of this very knotty problem have been unknotted and re-knotted, is it, or is it not, in order to raise the question: what is the plural of Lord Bishop? Is it possible to maintain that the proper form is "Lord Bishops"? Or will there be any correspondent so bold as to propose the form "Lords Bishop"?[1]
I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

T. S. ELIOT

24, Russell Square, W.C.1, April 9.

NOTES

1. The letter to the editor of the *Times* by P. W. Montague-Smith of 19 Mar 1947 (5), raising the question of whether Suffragan Bishops are entitled to be addressed as "Lord Bishop" in the same way as are Diocesan Bishops, prompted a series of other letters on this issue, none of which featured the plural "Lords Bishop." In his letter published here with TSE's, the anonymous editor of *Crockford's Clerical Directory* explained that "Crockford accords to Bishops Suffagan the long-established courtesy of being known as 'Lord Bishops.' The fact that Diocesan Bishops of the Establishment have seats in the House of Lords confuses an issue on which it has no bearing." O. B. Wallis replied to TSE's letter on 15 Apr: "Surely not, for Bishop is the noun and Lord the adjective" adding that "true English still does not inflect adjectives" (5).

Author's Note. Leaflet for a Recording of *Four Quartets*[1]

A recording of a poem read by its author is no more definitive an "interpretation" than a recording of a symphony conducted by the composer. The poem, if it is of any depth and complexity, will have meanings in it concealed from the author; and should be capable of being read in many ways, and with a variety of emotional emphases.

A good poem, indeed, is one which even the most accomplished reading cannot exhaust.

What the recording of a poem by its author can and should preserve, is the way that poem sounded to the author when he had finished it. The disposition of lines on the page, and the punctuation (which includes the *absence* of punctuation marks, when they are omitted where the reader would expect them) can never give an exact notation of the author's metric. The chief value of the author's record, then, is as a guide to the rhythms.

Another reader, reciting the poem, need not feel bound to reproduce these rhythms: but, if he has studied the author's version, he can assure himself that he is departing from it deliberately, and not from ignorance.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Printed in italics in the form of a cream broadside (19.1 x 13.4 cm), the separate leaflet accompanied the six 78 rpm records of *Four Quartets*, recorded in Sept 1947 under the auspices of the British Council by The Gramophone Co. (Hayes, Middlesex, 1947), with its trademark "His Master's Voice." When submitting the text on 10 Apr, TSE wrote to Evelyn Donald in the music department of the British Council: "I dare say the Gramophone people would prefer something more picturesque and glamorous, but this is really all I want to put down." TSE prerecorded his reading of the sleeve note on 4 Sept 1947 in the BBC's mobile recording car; on the broadcast of 5 Sept, the reading of the note was followed by a playing of the records, aired from 9:55 to 11:00 p.m.

On 12 Feb 1948, TSE replied to a query from Gallup: "The pamphlet to which you refer in connection with the gramophone records is not a pamphlet at all but merely one slip. . . . It is merely to explain my own view of the use and the limitations of a reading by an author of his own poems" (Beinecke).

UNESCO and the Philosopher

To the Editor of *The Times*[1]

The Times (20 Sept 1947) 5

Sir, – M. Mayoux appears to have disposed of Mr. Arthur Waley's criticism by pointing out that Unesco is concerned not with promoting the interests of philosophers, but with making use of philosophers, or, in his own words, "bringing them to serve the purposes laid down in the Charter."[2] It may still be asked, however, whether philosophers will not in the long run be of more service to these or any other laudable purposes if they are first aided (1) to read each other's books; (2) to see one another occasionally. Thus Mr. Waley's question returns in a modified form.

The formulation of Unesco's purposes is so obscure that it suggests – at least to one who cannot pretend to be a philosopher – more questions than it answers. I shall ask only one. In the phrase "international cooperation in education, science, and culture" how is the term culture to be interpreted? I had always understood culture to comprehend education and science, as well as other interests.[3]

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

T. S. ELIOT

71, Pall Mall, S.W.1, Sept. 17.[4]

NOTES

1. CC in King's (L9h). This and succeeding letters by TSE on the aims of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, founded 16 Nov 1945) were preceded by correspondence with the biologist Julian Huxley (1887-1975), the first director-general of UNESCO. On 27 Mar 1947, Huxley sent to TSE for his review UNESCO's draft memorandum of human rights, to which he replied on 18 Apr: "I will confess frankly . . . that my first sentiment is one of astonishment that Unesco should be occupied with such a formulation. A statement of the rights of man, unless it was a tissue of ambiguities, could never, I think, be framed in such a way as to command the assent of all intelligent men. It seems, therefore, a more appropriate activity for philosophers as private individuals than for an official body of the universal scope of Unesco. I should have thought that Unesco would be better occupied in the more particular activities of beneficence in helping injured countries to reorganize the higher part of their life."

2. When UNESCO's Section of Philosophy and Humanistic Studies sent out a questionnaire to discover how philosophers of various countries could work together, the English Sinologist Arthur Waley (1889-1966) replied in a letter to the *Times* of 2 Sept 1947 (5): "Philosophers, like

other intellectual workers, need (1) to read one another's books; (2) to see one another occasionally. If Unesco took practical steps to satisfy these two needs its 'Humanistic Studies and Philosophy' section would have done its job." In his letter of 16 Sept (5), the Head of Section of Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, Jean-Jacques Mayoux (1901-87), dismissed Waley's "misconception of Unesco's functions in regard to philosophy" by arguing that these "must, by the nature of our organization, be confined to discovering ways in which philosophy and philosophers can be brought to serve the purposes laid down in our Charter, of promoting peace and security and the general welfare of mankind through international cooperation in education, science, and culture."

3. TSE wrote to Mary Trevelyan on 30 Sept: "Meanwhile I note that M. Mayoux has not replied to my letter in the Times . . . what can helpless people like me and Waley (known familiarly as l'il Artha) do against Organisation?"

4. TSE writes from the address of his club, the Oxford and Cambridge Club.

On Poetry: An Address by T. S. Eliot on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Concord Academy, Concord, Massachusetts, June 3, 1947

Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1947. Pp. 15.[1]

It is a time-honored custom, at every Commencement everywhere, for somebody to make a speech addressed to the Graduating Class. My own belief is that the Graduating Class are usually just the ones who don't listen to it. Some of the younger members of the school may listen, especially if this is the first Commencement that they have attended; and some of the elder people may listen, partly from politeness, and partly for more obscure reasons. But the Graduating Class usually has too much on its mind: it may be thinking of the past, and is certainly thinking of the future; but not of what a man they have never seen before may be saying to them on a hot June day. I once graduated from a school myself: I remember the occasion very well, though it is a good many years ago; but the one thing I do not remember, because I suspect I never was aware at the time, is the name and appearance of the distinguished person who spoke to us, or what he said. I don't think we minded sitting patiently while he talked; we took it for granted that we were there to be talked to; and I don't think we even knew that we were not listening.

But I have not merely graduated myself, I have made graduation speeches before this one.[2] I do not even remember what I said myself on any of these occasions. I should like this time to make a speech that I shall remember, even if no one else does. And the one thing I am sure of is, that if one wants to make a speech that anybody will remember, or get anything out of, it is best to talk about something that one really knows about. It is still better if it is a subject that the listeners believe you know something about.

Now, the one thing that I think I know something about, and that other people agree I know something about, is poetry. We may all be wrong, and in that case two people have simply made a mistake: one in inviting me to speak, and I in accepting the invitation. For that is what I mean to talk about. This audience, unless it is very different from other commencement audiences, probably contains two different types of listener: those who write, or want to

write, poetry themselves, and those who object to being asked to read poetry. Of course, there are some who don't want to write poetry and at the same time don't object seriously to reading it, but these are probably a minority. So I shall try to say something for those who would like to be poets, and to those who see no use at all in poetry, hoping that those who neither want to write nor object to reading, will find something worth listening to as well.

The usual Commencement speaker, I imagine, is somebody who has made a success in life in one definite line or another. But, if there is one thing the poet is not, he is not a successful man. In the first place, poetry is not a career: and success ordinarily means a career. The first thing about poetry is, that nobody can make a living out of it. Painters and musicians sometimes make a living, simply because painting and music are necessarily whole time jobs. You have not time for anything else, therefore you either live by painting or music or you don't live at all. Poetry, fortunately, is not a whole time job. You can only write poetry for a few hours a day, and there are many days when you cannot write it at all. This is fortunate, because the poet, unless he has a sufficient private income – that is the exception, and I am not sure that it is a good thing – I am sure at least that it would not have been good for me – the poet must find some other way of earning an income, and the less his way of earning a living has to do with poetry, the better. I myself started by trying to be a teacher; I only tried that for a year and a half; and after that I had eight very satisfactory years working in a bank, dealing with sight drafts, acceptances, bills of lading, and such mysteries, and eventually writing articles on the movement of the foreign exchanges for the bank magazine.[3] The difficulty is that you may become interested in the work you have to do for a living; if you become interested, you become rather good at it; if you become good at it, you get promoted; and the more you get promoted the less time and energy you have for poetry – which was the original reason for doing such work at all. I know one very fine poet who was obliged to resign from a government department simply because he had become too important: he had to take a less well paid job somewhere else in order to have any time and energy for poetry.

If you became too ambitious in the work you have chosen, or fallen into, in order to support you so that you can write poetry, then the poetry must suffer. And on the other hand, it is no good being ambitious to be a poet. I do not despise ambition. For most people, in most occupations, it is a very good thing: so long as ambition is not excessive; so long as it does not make them hard and ruthless; so long as it does not lead them to sacrifice persons

and spiritual values; so long, in short, as people remember that in the eyes of God all of us are weak and sinful and at best fall very short, in the end, of what we were meant to be.[4] And I do not see any reason why people who succeed should not take pride in their success, so long as they do not look down on the less successful, or blind themselves to the other respects in which they have failed. But the poet must never be ambitious to be a poet, or take satisfaction in his success as a poet.

I must try to make this a little clearer. One can speak only from one's own experience. I have always been haunted by one or the other of two doubts. The first is, that nothing I have written is really of permanent value:[5] and that makes it hard to believe in what one wants to do next. Neither one's inner feelings, nor public approval, is satisfactory assurance: for some men have been enthusiastic about their own poetry, and nobody has agreed with them; and other men have been acclaimed as great poets, and ridiculed by a later generation. But the second doubt is still more distressing. I sometimes feel that some, at least, of what I have written, is very good, but that I shall never again write anything good. Some imp always whispers to me, as I am struggling to get down to any new piece of work, that this is going to be lamentably bad, and that I won't know it. At least three times during my life, and for periods of some duration, I have been convinced that I shall never again be able to write anything worth reading. And perhaps this time it is true. Certainly ambition, or the desire to do something of permanent value, is of no help, but rather a hindrance. And the more you get success, that is to say the more your work is praised and talked about in the magazines, the more difficult it becomes to write the next thing so that it shall be the thing you have it in you to write, instead of the thing that you know people expect of you to do.

Whether this is true for all artists I cannot say: but I am sure that for a poet humility is the most essential virtue. That means, not to be influenced by the desire for applause, not to be influenced by the desire to excel anybody else, not to be influenced by what your readers expect of you, not to write something merely because it is high time you wrote something, but to wait patiently, not caring how you compare with other poets, for the impulse which you cannot resist – or to accept the outside invitation just as a job to be done without worrying whether it is to be poetry or not. I wrote *The Waste Land* simply to relieve my own feelings;[6] I wrote *Murder in the Cathedral* because I was asked to provide a play for a festival at Canterbury Cathedral, under certain conditions and by a certain date.

I sometimes think that poets like Emily Dickinson, who never had any fame during their lifetime, who never had any books written about them while they were alive, or articles in the *Times* or *Herald-Tribune* Literary Supplements, have been the most fortunate.[7] They had no reason to write except that they need talk to themselves in that way. So, if anybody here wants to write poetry, let her be sure that what she wants is to put something down in such a way that she can feel satisfaction in having expressed it, even if no one ever reads it. In most kinds of writing, it is necessary to think, for what audience are you writing? In poetry, it is often necessary to forget the audience altogether. There are moments, certainly, when one needs encouragement to go on at all; when we need an audience of one or two people who believe in us, and in whom we believe: but real poetry comes primarily from a pressure inside us, and not from a call from an audience.

And in between the writing of poems one is not a *poet*: one is the author of certain *poems*: but, as I have already said, one is not sure that one will ever write another poem, and therefore has not the satisfaction of thinking of oneself as a "poet."

What I have been saying is apparently of interest only to those among you who write or want to write verse. But I think that it has some point for everybody. That nobody is altogether a "success" in life, but that everybody is more or less a "failure"; that what would appear successes are often failures and *vice versa*; and that nobody should be so desperate as to believe that he has wholly failed; and that nobody should be so complacent as to believe that he has succeeded.[8†]

Now I want to say something more directly to those of you who think they don't like poetry: to those who may have choked, perhaps, in having my own stuff forced down your throats. It is often supposed that poetry is only for those peculiar people who want to write it. Why should anybody, in school or in college, be made to read poetry, unless they get thrills out of it? Well, I should like to put just one suggestion into the minds of those who don't like poetry, and who think that science or the social sciences are what is suitable for really serious people. Has it ever been suggested to you that a training in the best poetry might help to protect you against ordinary everyday prose humbug?

If you study the best classic English prose: that of Swift, Burke, of Adams and Jefferson, of Lincoln, of F. H. Bradley, you will become familiar with writers who say exactly what they mean. But these writers express ideas exactly. By studying the best poetry you become familiar with authors who

express feelings exactly. Now, we are apt to think that prose can be exact, but that poetry is always something vague and cloudy. But, unless we can be clear about feelings, we cannot be sure of being clear about thought. Most of the prose which we read, and that includes everything we read in the daily papers, professes to present facts, or ideas, without appeal to our emotions. In reality, most of what we read is playing upon our emotions, and pretending to appeal only to our minds. And this is one of the great dangers of the present time.

There are three main kinds of prose. There is scientific prose, which aims to set forth the facts about something. I do not mean only books about physics or chemistry, or about any other "science": but writing about all sorts of subjects – how to navigate a ship, how to tie knots, how to make things. This kind of prose is not so easy to write as it looks: most of us have been puzzled at some time by the leaflet of directions that comes with some mechanical contrivance that we have bought, or even the directions on a medicine bottle. Then there is imaginative prose, such as novels, which convey to us what it feels like to be a particular character in a particular situation, and which introduce us to all sorts of people and situations outside of our experience. And descriptive prose, which may be factual, and scientific, or which may show us how to respond more sensitively to a landscape or a picture, and is therefore imaginative. And finally, a much larger part of what we read, in newspapers and magazines, is intended to persuade us of something. When the writer begins by stating his view, and making clear that he is aiming to convince us by reason, that is good and fair. But a good deal of printed matter is trying to persuade us of something without our knowing it, and even without the author knowing it; and this includes a good many most learned and respectable history books. I prefer a history writer who takes sides openly to one who thinks he is impartial: because with the former we know where we are. The latter may be presenting as a fact what is only his own feeling about the fact.

Now if we learn to read poetry properly, the poet never persuades us to believe anything. There are great philosophical poems. We cannot understand Dante without coming to learn a great deal about the Catholic Church, as well as about a number of other things. We cannot understand that great poem of India, the Bhagavadgita, unless we have some understanding of Hindu religion. But what we learn from Dante, or the Bhagavadgita, or any other religious poem, is what it *feels like* to believe that religion. If we like the feeling, we may be led to go on and study that religion: but nobody should ever be converted to believe anything directly by a poem.

Poetry helps us both to understand our own feelings better, and to understand a much wider range of emotions and feelings than we could ever know in our own limited experience. This is obvious of dramatic and narrative poetry, of the great plays and epics, but it is true of other poetry too. And the more good poetry we come to enjoy, and the better we come to know it, the more clearly we shall become aware of any kind of emotional appeal made to us in the other kinds of printed matter that we read. Of course I emphasize the word *enjoy*. You don't get any real understanding unless you enjoy it. We start by being carried away by one particular poet: for me, at the age of fourteen, it was Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam*; for some it is Housman's *Shropshire Lad*; for many it has been Shelley.[9] It is bad when we remain readers of one poet only, for no one poet can introduce us to more than a narrow range of new experience. But we are likely to find, when we are a year or so older, that some other poet takes the place in our life of the first one; and gradually we find more and more doors opening. I was, I think, pretty well grown up before I really began to appreciate Shakespeare; and he is a poet from whom I feel that I learn more and more, as I get older and gradually a little more perceptive.[10]

Now all this has a direct bearing upon politics, and politics is something in which we all have to take an interest, because we all have a public responsibility to vote. What differentiates a free people from a mob is that the former consists of individuals who use their brains in voting, and the latter is merely moved by prejudice or mass emotion. And the responsibility to use one's brains is everybody's: you can't get out of it merely by saying modestly that you are not brainy. The duty is to use what brain God has given you: and it is more important to know *why* you are voting for somebody, than to vote, as you may by accident, for the best candidate. Even the most intelligent of us will always have to ask themselves, always, *why* they are inclined to vote a particular way. And one of the most important things, in reading papers, in considering any of the immense quantity of matter that is poured out upon us every day in favor of this or in opposition to that, is to be able to see when people are appealing to your reason and when they are simply trying to awaken a prejudice, appeal to your narrower selfish interests or to your antipathies – in short, trying to disguise emotion as thought. Science should teach us to know when a theorem is proved, when a fact is demonstrated, when a chain of reasoning holds together. Poetry should teach us to understand the ways of expressing emotions and feelings in words. So it seems to me that poetry as well as science – poetry because I believe it

can help us to distinguish an appeal to our reason from an appeal to our emotions – is important for the formation of good citizens.

NOTES

1. An editorial note states: "This address is recorded with the gracious permission of Mr. Eliot for the alumnae of Concord Academy" (3); published in Oct and distributed gratis to alumnae and friends of the academy. TSE wrote to Dorothea Richards on 18 Mar 1947: "I have agreed, to oblige a friend, to give the prize-day address at a school on Concord on the 4th June, a task I dislike exceedingly." The friend in question was Emily Hale, who was teaching at Concord Academy at the time.

2. TSE gave the Commencement Address at his former school, the Milton Academy, on 17 June 1933 (4.817).

3. TSE worked as a schoolteacher for a term at High Wycombe Grammar School in 1915-16 and then at Highgate Junior School until the end of 1916. In Mar 1917, he joined the Foreign and Colonial Department at Lloyds Bank at 17 Cornhill. He moved to the Information Department of Lloyds Bank in 1918; in Jan 1923, he was made head of the Intelligence Department, writing to his mother that he read ten to fifteen foreign newspapers each day. In 1923-25, he was publishing a daily sheet of extracts and writing a monthly article on foreign exchanges for *Lloyds Bank Monthly*.

4. Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (KJV).

5. TSE wrote to his brother, Henry, on 7 Sept 1916, a year after the publication of "Prufrock," "I often feel that 'J.A.P.' is a swan song" (*L1* 165); he later confessed in a letter to John Hayward of 24 Nov 1939: "I doubt the permanent value of everything I have written" (King's).

6. "To me it was only the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling" (TSE quoted by Theodore Spencer during a lecture at Harvard) (*WLF* 1). See also 4.842.

7. Although the American poet Emily Dickinson (1830-86) authored nearly eighteen hundred poems, most of them were published posthumously after her younger sister Lavinia discovered the collection.

8†. In the Harford W. H. Powel collection on T. S. Eliot at Brown University, the typescript of the address contains one page that was omitted from the printed version:

> I can't think of anyone more to be pitied than the person who regards himself as "successful." Some people can recognise themselves as having had a happy life: but the person who considers that he has had a "successful" life has probably a very low opinion of "success." One ought to be more aware of how far one has fallen short of the ideal. As one goes on, writing verse, into middle age, one can only do well by becoming more and more conscious of one's limitations: of what one can do well, and of what one cannot do; learning to use one's abilities to the best and to avoid overstraining oneself where weakest. And I think that some of what I have said about the practice of poetry is applicable to the greatest and most general profession of all – that of marriage. For, just as a poet can never be sure that he knows how to write poetry, but must constantly start as if afresh, so, I think, married people must always regard each other as a mysterious person whom they are gradually getting to know, in a process which must go on to the end of the life of one or the other. The poets who think that

whatever they write next is sure to be poetry, are like the married people who think that they know all about each other. Every moment is a new problem, and you cannot succeed, in the best meaning of "success," unless you approach the new poem, or the familiar husband or wife, with a feeling that there is a great deal for you to learn.

9. TSE taught Edward FitzGerald's *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1859) in his 1916 Extension course on modern English literature (1.480). In his Norton lecture on "Shelley and Keats" (1933), he stated: "I can still enjoy Fitzgerald's *Omar*, though I do not hold that rather smart and shallow view of life. But some of Shelley's views I positively dislike" though he admitted in the same lecture: "I was intoxicated by Shelley's poetry at the age of fifteen" (4.643, 647).

10. Although TSE had read all of Shakespeare by the age of fifteen (*L1* 5) and written about him in the 1910s, he admitted in "How to Read Poetry" (1938) that "Shakespeare did not mean very much to me until I was over thirty" (5.631).

UNESCO and its Aims. The Definition of Culture

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (17 Oct 1947) 7

Sir, – The Director-General of Unesco[1†] tells us that the original design from which Unesco evolved was for an organization to be devoted primarily to education; but that it became obvious to the Council of Allied Ministers of Education meeting in 1942 that such an organization should concern itself also with "the culture which education should be designed to transmit."[2] In his third paragraph Dr. Huxley recognizes that there are several senses of the word "culture." In order, therefore, to profit by the reference to the opinion of the Council of Allied Ministers we ought to know (1) in what sense they were using the word "culture"; (2) whether they meant the whole of culture in that sense or only a part – such part as education should be designed to transmit.

In mentioning the several meanings of the word "culture," Dr. Huxley does not tell us in which sense it has its place in Unesco; but he indicates the sense in which the word is "most commonly used." This sense, he says, implies "the cultivation of the mind, including some acquaintance with the artistic and intellectual achievements of the past as well as the present, and usually focused more on literature and the arts and their applications than upon the sciences." Is not such cultivation of the mind comprehended by "education"? But perhaps Dr. Huxley means that Unesco concerns itself with literature and the arts in other ways than through education. If this is so, would it not be better to say "literature and the arts" instead of "culture"? We should not, to be sure, arrive at such a neat title; but, by including philosophy, we could have Unesalpo, which seems to me good enough.[3]

It is only because I am convinced of the capital importance of a preliminary *nettoyage de la situation verbale*, of trying to form clear and distinct ideas of what we want to do before we set out to do it, that I enter upon these considerations.[4] Let us hope that the philosophers whom Unesco is assembling in Mexico City will enlighten us, and that their report will be made available to the public.[5]

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

T. S. ELIOT

71, Pall Mall, Oct. 14.

NOTES

1†. On CC: "Dr. Julian Huxley" crossed out.

2. Prompted by TSE's letter of 20 Sept 1947 (see 7.9), Julian Huxley wrote on 10 Oct (5), under "History of a Title / Relations of Science and Culture," to explain how the term *culture* is to be interpreted in the formulation of UNESCO's aims. TSE wrote to Dorothy Bussy on 16 Oct that the delay in writing was due to, among other things, his "having to compose a long letter to *The Times* in reply to Julian Huxley which they probably won't print."

3. Huxley explained: "to avoid misapprehension, and also for historical reasons, the three terms were all employed in the definitive title, and Uneco became Unesco" (5).

4. *nettoyage de la situation verbale*: clean-up of the verbal situation. In "Poésie et pensée abstraite" [Poetry and Abstract Thought] (1939) Paul Valéry pointed out: "En toute question, et avant tout examen sur le fond, je regarde au langage; j'ai coutume de procéder à la mode des chirurgiens qui purifient d'abord leurs mains et préparent leur champ opératoire. C'est ce que j'appelle le *nettoyage de la situation verbale*" (*Variété V*, Paris: Gallimard, 1944, 131). *Trans*: With every question, before making any examination of the content, I look at the language; I have the habit of proceeding like surgeons who first sterilize their hands and prepare the surgical site. It is what I call the *clean-up of the verbal situation*.

5. Huxley announced at the end of his letter of 10 Oct that the answers to the questionnaires on philosophy and the humanities, which had prompted Arthur Waley to write to the *Times* (see 7.9, n.2), and the deliberations of the committee of philosophers tasked with considering these answers and discussing the role of philosophy and the humanities in UNESCO, will be presented to the second session of the General Conference of UNESCO in Mexico City in Nov.

Milton II[1]

Samuel Johnson, addressing himself to examine Milton's versification, in the *Rambler* of Saturday, January 12, 1751, thought it necessary to excuse his temerity in writing upon a subject already so fully discussed. In justification of his essay this great critic and poet remarked: "There are, in every age, new errors to be rectified, and new prejudices to be opposed."[2] I am obliged to phrase my own apology rather differently. The errors of our own times have been rectified by vigorous hands, and the prejudices opposed by commanding voices. Some of the errors and prejudices have been associated with my own name, and of these in particular I shall find myself impelled to speak; it will, I hope, be attributed to me for modesty rather than for conceit if I maintain that no one can correct an error with better authority than the person who has been held responsible for it. And there is, I think, another justification for my speaking about Milton, besides the singular one which I have just given. The champions of Milton in our time, with one notable exception, have been scholars and teachers.[3] I have no claim to be either: I am aware that my only claim upon your attention, in speaking of Milton or of any other great poet, is by appeal to your curiosity, in the hope that you may care to know what a contemporary writer of verse thinks of one of his predecessors.

I believe that the scholar and the practitioner in the field of literary criticism should supplement each other's work. The criticism of the practitioner will be all the better, certainly, if he is not wholly destitute of scholarship; and the criticism of the scholar will be all the better if he has some experience of the difficulties of writing verse. But the orientation of the two critics is different. The scholar is more concerned with the understanding of the masterpiece in the environment of its author: with the world in which that author lived, the temper of his age, his intellectual formation, the books which he had read, and the influences which had moulded him. The practitioner is concerned less with the author than with the poem; and with the poem in relation to his own age. He asks: Of what *use* is the poetry of this poet to poets writing to-day? Is it, or can it become, a living force in English poetry still unwritten? So we may say that the scholar's interest is in the permanent, the practitioner's in the immediate. The scholar can teach us where we should

bestow our *admiration* and *respect*: the practitioner should be able, when he is the right poet talking about the right poet, to make an old masterpiece actual, give it contemporary importance, and persuade his audience that it is interesting, exciting, enjoyable, and *active*. I can give only one example of contemporary criticism of Milton, by a critic of the type to which I belong if I have any critical pretensions at all: that is the Introduction to Milton's *English Poems* in the "World's Classics" series, by the late Charles Williams. It is not a comprehensive essay; it is notable primarily because it provides the best prolegomenon to *Comus* which any modern reader could have; but what distinguishes it throughout (and the same is true of most of Williams's critical writing) is the author's warmth of feeling and his success in communicating it to the reader. In this, so far as I am aware, the essay of Williams is a solitary example.[4]

I think it is useful, in such an examination as I propose to make, to keep in mind some critic of the past, of one's own type, by whom to measure one's opinions: a critic sufficiently remote in time, for his local errors and prejudices to be not identical with one's own. That is why I began by quoting Samuel Johnson. It will hardly be contested that as a critic of poetry Johnson wrote as a practitioner and not as a scholar. Because he was a poet himself, and a good poet, what he wrote about poetry must be read with respect. And unless we know and appreciate Johnson's poetry we cannot judge either the merits or the limitations of his criticism. It is a pity that what the common reader to-day has read, or has remembered, or has seen quoted, are mostly those few statements of Johnson's from which later critics have vehemently dissented. But when Johnson held an opinion which seems to us wrong, we are never safe in dismissing it without inquiring why he was wrong; he had his own "errors and prejudices," certainly, but for lack of examining them sympathetically we are always in danger of merely countering error with error and prejudice with prejudice. Now Johnson was, in his day, very much a modern: he was concerned with how poetry should be written in his own time. The fact that he came towards the end, rather than the beginning of a style, the fact that his time was rapidly passing away, and that the canons of taste which he observed were about to fall into desuetude, does not diminish the interest of his criticism. Nor does the likelihood that the development of poetry in the next fifty years will take quite different directions from those which to me seem desirable to explore, deter me from asking the questions that Johnson implied: How should poetry be written now? and what place does the answer to this question give to Milton? And I think that the

answers to these questions may be different now from the answers that were correct twenty-five years ago.

There is one prejudice against Milton, apparent on almost every page of Johnson's *Life of Milton*, which I imagine is still general: we, however, with a longer historical perspective, are in a better position than was Johnson to recognize it and to make allowance for it. This is a prejudice which I share myself: an antipathy towards Milton the man. Of this in itself I have nothing further to say: all that is necessary is to record one's awareness of it. But this prejudice is often involved with another, more obscure: and I do not think that Johnson had disengaged the two in his own mind. The fact is simply that the Civil War of the seventeenth century, in which Milton is a symbolic figure, has never been concluded. The Civil War is not ended: I question whether any serious civil war ever does end. Throughout that period English society was so convulsed and divided that the effects are still felt. Reading Johnson's essay one is always aware that Johnson was obstinately and passionately of another party. No other English poet, not Wordsworth, or Shelley, lived through or took sides in such momentous events as did Milton; of no other poet is it so difficult to consider the poetry simply as poetry, without our theological and political dispositions, conscious and unconscious, inherited or acquired, making an unlawful entry. And the danger is all the greater because these emotions now take different vestures. It is now considered grotesque, on political grounds, to be of the party of King Charles; it is now, I believe, considered equally grotesque, on moral grounds, to be of the party of the Puritans; and to most persons to-day the religious views of both parties may seem equally remote. Nevertheless, the passions are unquenched, and if we are not very wide awake their smoke will obscure the glass through which we examine Milton's poetry. Something has been done, certainly, to persuade us that Milton was never really of any party, but disagreed with everyone. Mr. Wilson Knight, in *Chariot of Wrath*, has argued that Milton was more a monarchist than a republican, and not in any modern sense a "democrat,"[5] and Professor Saurat[6†] has produced evidence to show that Milton's theology was highly eccentric, and as scandalous to Protestants as to Catholics – that he was, in fact, a sort of Christadelphian, and perhaps not a very orthodox Christadelphian at that; while on the other hand Mr. C. S. Lewis has opposed Professor Saurat by skilfully arguing that Milton, at least in *Paradise Lost*, can be acquitted of heresy even from a point of view so orthodox as that of Mr. Lewis himself.[7] On these questions I hold no opinion: it is probably beneficial to question the assumption that Milton

was a sound Free Churchman and member of the Liberal Party; but I think that we still have to be on guard against an unconscious partisanship if we aim to attend to the poetry for the poetry's sake.

So much for our prejudices. I come next to the positive objection to Milton which has been raised in our own time, that is to say, the charge that he is an unwholesome influence. And from this I shall proceed to the permanent strictures of reproof (to employ a phrase of Johnson's)[8] and, finally, to the grounds on which I consider him a great poet and one whom poets to-day might study with profit.

For a statement of the *generalized* belief in the unwholesomeness of Milton's influence I turn to Mr. Middleton Murry's critique of Milton in his *Heaven and Earth* – a book which contains chapters of profound insight, interrupted by passages which seem to me intemperate. Mr. Murry approaches Milton after his long and patient study of Keats; and it is through the eyes of Keats that he sees Milton.

> Keats [Mr. Murry writes], as a poetic artist, second to none since Shakespeare, and Blake, as a prophet of spiritual verities unique in our history, both passed substantially the same judgement on Milton: "Life to him would be death to me." And whatever may be our verdict on the development of English poetry since Milton, we must admit the justice of Keats's opinion that Milton's magnificence led nowhere. "English must be kept up," said Keats. To be influenced beyond a certain point by Milton's art, he felt, dammed the creative flow of the English genius in and through himself. In saying this, I think, Keats voiced the very inmost of the English genius. To pass under the spell of Milton is to be condemned to imitate him. It is quite different with Shakespeare. Shakespeare baffles and liberates; Milton is perspicuous and constricts.[9]

This is a very confident affirmation,[10†] and I criticize it with some diffidence because I cannot pretend to have devoted as much study to Keats, or to have as intimate an understanding of his difficulties, as Mr. Murry. But Mr. Murry seems to me here to be trying to transform the predicament of a particular poet with a particular aim at a particular moment in time into a censure of timeless validity. He appears to assert that the liberative function of Shakespeare and the constrictive menace of Milton are permanent characteristics of these two poets. "To be influenced beyond a certain point" by any one master is bad for any poet; and it does not matter whether that influence is Milton's or another's; and as we cannot anticipate

where that point will come, we might be better advised to call it an *un*certain point. If it is not good to remain under the spell of Milton, is it good to remain under the spell of Shakespeare? It depends partly upon what genre of poetry you are trying to develop. Keats wanted to write an epic, and he found, as might be expected, that the time had not arrived at which another English epic, comparable in grandeur to *Paradise Lost*, could be written. He also tried his hand at writing plays: and one might argue that *King Stephen* was more blighted by Shakespeare than *Hyperion* by Milton.[11] Certainly, *Hyperion* remains a magnificent fragment which one re-reads; and *King Stephen* is a play which we may have read once, but to which we never return for enjoyment. Milton made a great epic impossible for succeeding generations; Shakespeare made a great poetic drama impossible; such a situation is inevitable, and it persists until the language has so altered that there is no danger, because no possibility, of imitation. Anyone who tries to write poetic drama, even to-day, should know that half of his energy must be exhausted in the effort to escape from the constricting toils of Shakespeare: the moment his attention is relaxed, or his mind fatigued, he will lapse into bad Shakespearian verse. For a long time after an epic poet like Milton, or a dramatic poet like Shakespeare, nothing can be done. Yet the effort must be repeatedly made; for we can never know in advance when the moment is approaching at which a new epic, or a new drama, will be possible; and when the moment does draw near it may be that the genius of an individual poet will perform the last mutation of idiom and versification which will bring that new poetry into being.

I have referred to Mr. Murry's view of the bad influence of Milton as generalized, because it is implicitly the whole personality of Milton that is in question: not specifically his beliefs, or his language or versification, but the beliefs as realized in that particular personality, and his poetry as the expression of it. By the *particular* view of Milton's influence as bad, I mean that view which attends to the language, the syntax, the versification, the imagery. I do not suggest that there is here a complete difference of subject matter:[12†] it is the difference of approach, the difference of the focus of interest, between the philosophical critic and the literary critic. An incapacity for the abstruse, and an interest in poetry which is primarily a technical interest, dispose my mind towards the more limited and perhaps more superficial task. Let us proceed to look at Milton's influence from this point of view, that of the writer of poetry in our own time.

The reproach against Milton, that his technical influence has been bad, appears to have been made by no one more positively than by myself. I find myself saying, as recently as 1936, that this charge against Milton

> appears a good deal more serious if we affirm that Milton's poetry could *only* be an influence for the worse, upon any poet whatever. It is more serious, also, if we affirm that Milton's bad influence may be traced much farther than the eighteenth century, and much farther than upon bad poets: if we say that it was an influence against which we still have to struggle.[13]

In writing these sentences I failed to draw a threefold distinction,[14†] which now seems to me of some importance. There are three separate assertions implied. The first is, that an influence has been bad in the past: this is to assert that good poets, in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, would have written better if they had not submitted themselves to the influence of Milton. The second assertion is, that the contemporary situation is such that Milton is a master whom we should avoid. The third is, that the influence of Milton, or of any particular poet, can be *always* bad, and that we can predict that wherever it is found[15†] at any time in the future, however remote, it will be a bad influence. Now, the first and third of these assertions I am no longer prepared to make, because, detached from the second, they do not appear to me to have any meaning.

For the first, when we consider one great poet of the past, and one or more other poets, upon whom we say he has exerted a bad influence, we must admit that the responsibility, if there be any, is rather with the poets who were influenced than with the poet whose work exerted the influence. We can, of course, show that certain tricks or mannerisms which the imitators display are due to conscious or unconscious imitation and emulation, but that is a reproach against their injudicious choice of a model and not against their model itself. And we can never prove that any particular poet would have written better poetry if he had escaped that influence. Even if we assert, what can only be a matter of faith, that Keats would have written a very great epic poem if Milton had not preceded him, is it sensible to pine[16†] for an unwritten masterpiece, in exchange for one which we possess and acknowledge? And as for the remote future, what can we affirm about the poetry that will be written then, except that we should probably be unable to understand or to enjoy it, and that therefore we can hold no opinion as to what "good" and "bad" influences will *mean* in that future? The only relation in

which the question of influence, good and bad, is significant, is the relation to the immediate future. With that question I shall engage at the end. I wish first to mention another reproach against Milton, that represented by the phrase "dissociation of sensibility."

I remarked many years ago, in an essay on Dryden, that:

> In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered; and this dissociation, as is natural, was due to the influence of the two most powerful poets of the century, Milton and Dryden.[17]

The longer passage from which this sentence is taken[18†] is quoted by Dr. Tillyard in his *Milton*. Dr. Tillyard makes the following comment:

> Speaking only of what in this passage concerns Milton, I would say that there is here a mixture of truth and falsehood. Some sort of dissociation of sensibility in Milton, not necessarily undesirable, has to be admitted; but that he was responsible for any such dissociation in others (at least till this general dissociation had inevitably set in) is untrue.[19]

I believe[20†] that the general affirmation represented by the phrase "dissociation of sensibility" (one of the two or three phrases of my coinage – like "objective correlative" – which have had a success in the world astonishing to their author)[21] retains some validity; but I now incline to agree with Dr. Tillyard that to lay the burden on the shoulders of Milton and Dryden was a mistake. If such a dissociation did take place, I suspect that the causes are too complex and too profound to justify our accounting for the change in terms of literary criticism. All we can say is, that something like this did happen; that it had something to do with the Civil War; that it would even be unwise to say it was caused by the Civil War, but that it is a consequence of the same causes which brought about the Civil War; that we must seek the causes in Europe, not in England alone; and for what these causes were, we may dig and dig until we get to a depth at which words and concepts fail us.[22*†]

Before proceeding to take up the case against Milton, as it stood for poets twenty-five years ago – the second, and only significant meaning of "bad influence" – I think it would be best to consider what permanent strictures of reproof may be drawn: those censures which, when we make them, we must assume to be made by enduring laws of taste. The essence of the permanent censure of Milton is, I believe, to be found in Johnson's essay. This

is not the place in which to examine certain particular and erroneous judgments of Johnson; to explain his condemnation of *Comus* and *Samson* as the application of [23†] dramatic canons which to us seem inapplicable; or to condone his dismissal of the versification of *Lycidas* by the specialization, rather than the absence, of his sense of rhythm.[24] Johnson's most important censure of Milton is contained in three paragraphs, which I must ask leave to quote in full.

> Throughout all his greater works [says Johnson] there prevails an uniform peculiarity of *diction*, a mode and cast of expression which bears little resemblance to that of any former writer; and which is so far removed from common use, that an unlearned reader, when he first opens his book, finds himself surprised by a new language.
>
> This novelty has been, by those who can find nothing wrong with Milton, imputed to his laborious endeavours after words suitable to the grandeur of his ideas. *Our language*, says Addison, *sunk under him*.[25] But the truth is, that, both in prose and in verse, he had formed his style by a perverse and pedantic principle. He was desirous to use English words with a foreign idiom. This in all his prose is discovered and condemned; for there judgment operates freely, neither softened by the beauty, nor awed by the dignity of his thoughts; but such is the power of his poetry, that his call is obeyed without resistance, the reader feels himself in captivity to a higher and nobler mind, and criticism sinks in admiration.
>
> Milton's style was not modified by his subject; what is shown with greater extent in "Paradise Lost" may be found in "Comus." One source of his peculiarity was his familiarity with the Tuscan poets; the disposition of his words is, I think, frequently Italian; perhaps sometimes combined with other tongues. Of him, at last, may be said what Jonson said of Spenser, that *he wrote no language*, but has formed what Butler called a *Babylonish Dialect*, in itself harsh and barbarous, but made by exalted genius and extensive learning the vehicle of so much instruction and so much pleasure, that, like other lovers, we find grace in its deformity.[26]

This criticism seems to me substantially true:[27†] indeed, unless we accept it, I do not think we are in the way to appreciate the peculiar greatness of Milton. His style is not a *classic* style, in that it is not the elevation of a *common* style, by the final touch of genius, to greatness. It is, from the

foundation, and in every particular, a personal style, not based upon common speech, or common prose, or direct communication of meaning. Of some great poetry one has difficulty in pronouncing just what it is, what infinitesimal touch, that has made all the difference from a plain statement which anyone could make; the slight transformation which, while it leaves a plain statement a plain statement, has always the maximal, never the minimal, alteration of ordinary language.[28†] Every distortion of construction, the foreign idiom, the use of a word in a foreign way or with the meaning of the foreign word from which it is derived rather than the accepted meaning in English, every idiosyncrasy is a particular act of violence which Milton has been the first to commit. There is no cliché, no poetic diction in the derogatory sense, but a perpetual sequence of original acts of lawlessness. Of all modern writers of verse, the nearest analogy seems to me to be Mallarmé, a much smaller poet, though still a great one. The personalities, the poetic theories of the two men could not have been more different; but in respect of the violence which they could do to language, and justify, there is a remote similarity. Milton's poetry is poetry as the farthest possible remove from prose; his prose seems to me too near to half-formed poetry to be a good prose.[29†]

To say that the work of a poet is at the farthest possible remove from prose would once have struck me as condemnatory: it now seems to me simply, when we have to do with a Milton, the precision of its peculiar greatness. As a poet, Milton seems to me probably the greatest of all eccentrics. His work illustrates no general principles of good writing; the only principles of writing that it illustrates are such as are valid only for Milton himself to observe. There are two kinds of poet who can ordinarily be of use to other poets. There are those who suggest, to one or another of their successors, something which they have not done themselves, or who provoke a different way of doing the same thing: these are likely to be not the greatest, but smaller, imperfect poets with whom later poets discover an affinity. And there are the great poets from whom we can learn negative rules: no poet can teach another to write well, but some great poets can teach others some of the things to avoid. They teach us what to avoid, by showing us what great poetry can do without – how *bare* it can be. Of these are Dante and Racine. But if we are ever to make use of Milton we must do so in quite a different way. Even a small poet can learn something from the study of Dante, or from the study of Chaucer: we must perhaps wait for a great poet before we find one who can profit from the study of Milton.

I repeat that the remoteness of Milton's verse from ordinary speech, his invention of his own poetic language, seems to me one of the marks of his greatness. Other marks are his sense of structure, both in the general design of *Paradise Lost* and *Samson*, and in his syntax; and finally, and not least, his inerrancy, conscious or unconscious, in writing so as to make the best display of his talents, and the best concealment of his weaknesses.

The appropriateness of the subject of *Samson* is too obvious to expatiate upon: it was probably the one dramatic story out of which Milton could have made a masterpiece. But the complete suitability of *Paradise Lost* has not, I think, been so often remarked. It was surely an intuitive perception of what he could not do, that arrested Milton's project of an epic on King Arthur.[30] For one thing, he had little interest in, or understanding of, individual human beings. In *Paradise Lost* he was not called upon for any of that understanding which comes from an affectionate observation of men and women. But such an interest in human beings was not required – indeed its *absence* was a necessary condition – for the creation of his figures of Adam and Eve. These are not a man and woman such as any we know: if they were, they would not be Adam and Eve. They are the original *Man* and *Woman*, not types, but prototypes.[31†] They have the general characteristics of men and women, such that we can recognize, in the temptation and the fall, the first motions of the faults and virtues, the abjection and the nobility, of all their descendants. They have ordinary humanity to the right degree, and yet are not, and should not be, ordinary mortals. Were they more particularized they would be false, and if Milton had been more interested in humanity, he could not have created them. Other critics have remarked upon the exactness, without defect or exaggeration, with which Moloch, Belial, and Mammon, in the second book, speak according to the particular sin which each represents.[32] It would not be suitable that the infernal powers should have, in the human sense, characters, for a character is always mixed; but in the hands of an inferior manipulator, they might easily have been reduced to *humours*.

The appropriateness of the material of *Paradise Lost* to the genius and the limitations of Milton, is still more evident when we consider the visual imagery. I have already remarked, in a paper written some years ago,[33*†] on Milton's weakness of visual observation, a weakness which I think was always present – the effect of his blindness may have been rather to strengthen the compensatory qualities than to increase a fault which was already present.

Mr. Wilson Knight, who has devoted close study to recurrent imagery in poetry, has called attention to Milton's propensity towards images of engineering and mechanics;[34] to me it seems that Milton is at his best in imagery suggestive of vast size, limitless space, abysmal depth, and light and darkness. No theme and no setting, other than that which he chose in *Paradise Lost*, could have given him such scope for the kind of imagery in which he excelled, or made less demand upon those powers of visual imagination which were in him defective.

Most of the absurdities and inconsistencies to which Johnson calls attention, and which, so far as they can justly be isolated in this way, he properly condemns, will I think appear in a more correct proportion if we consider them in relation to this general judgment. I do not think that we should attempt to *see* very clearly any scene that Milton depicts: it should be accepted as a shifting phantasmagory. To complain, because we first find the archfiend "chain'd on the burning lake," and in a minute or two see him making his way to the shore, is to expect a kind of consistency which the world to which Milton has introduced us does not require.[35]

This limitation of visual power, like Milton's limited interest in human beings, turns out to be not merely a negligible defect, but a positive virtue, when we visit Adam and Eve in Eden. Just as a higher degree of characterization of Adam and Eve would have been unsuitable, so a more vivid picture of the earthly Paradise would have been less paradisiacal. For a greater definiteness, a more detailed account of flora and fauna, could only have assimilated Eden to the landscapes of earth with which we are familiar. As it is, the impression of Eden which we retain, is the most suitable, and is that which Milton was most qualified to give: the impression of *light* – a daylight and a starlight, a light of dawn and of dusk, the light which, remembered by a man in his blindness, has a supernatural glory unexperienced by men of normal vision.

We must, then, in reading *Paradise Lost*, not expect to see clearly; our sense of sight must be blurred, so that our *hearing* may become more acute. *Paradise Lost*, like *Finnegans Wake* (for I can think of no work which provides a more interesting parallel: two books by great blind musicians,[36†] each writing a language of his own based upon English) makes this peculiar demand for a readjustment of the reader's mode of apprehension. The emphasis is on the sound, not the vision, upon the word, not the idea; and in the end it is the unique versification that is the most certain sign of Milton's intellectual mastership.

On the subject of Milton's versification, so far as I am aware, little enough has been written. We have Johnson's essay in the *Rambler*, which deserves more study than it has received, and we have a short treatise by Robert Bridges on *Milton's Prosody*.[37] I speak of Bridges with respect, for no poet of our time has given such close attention to prosody as he. Bridges catalogues the systematic irregularities which give perpetual variety to Milton's verse, and I can find no fault with his analysis.[38*†] But however interesting these analyses are, I do not think that it is by such means that we gain an appreciation of the peculiar rhythm of a poet. It seems to me also that Milton's verse is especially refractory to yielding up its secrets to examination of the single line. For his verse is not formed in this way. It is the period, the sentence and still more the paragraph, that is the unit of Milton's verse; and emphasis on the line structure is the minimum necessary to provide a counter-pattern to the period structure. It is only in the period that the wave-length of Milton's verse is to be found: it is his ability to give a perfect and unique pattern to every paragraph, such that the full beauty of the line is found in its context, and his ability to work in larger musical units than any other poet – that is to me the most conclusive evidence of Milton's supreme mastery. The peculiar feeling, almost a physical sensation of a breathless leap, communicated by Milton's long periods, and by his alone, is impossible to procure from rhymed verse. Indeed, this mastery is more conclusive evidence of his intellectual power, than is his grasp of any *ideas* that he borrowed or invented. To be able to control so many words at once is the token of a mind of most exceptional energy.

It is interesting at this point to recall the general observations upon blank verse, which a consideration of *Paradise Lost* prompted Johnson to make towards the end of his essay.

> The music of the English heroic lines strikes the ear so faintly, that it is easily lost, unless all the syllables of every line co-operate together; this co-operation can only be obtained by the preservation of every verse unmingled with another as a distinct system of sounds; and this distinctness is obtained and preserved by the artifice of rhyme. The variety of pauses, so much boasted by the lovers of blank verse, changes the measures of an English poet to the periods of a declaimer; and there are only a few skilful and happy readers of Milton, who enable their audience to perceive where the lines end or begin. *Blank verse*, said an ingenious critic, *seems to be verse only to the eye*.[39]

Some of my audience may recall that this last remark,[40†] in almost the same words, was often made, a literary generation ago, about the "free verse" of the period: and even without this encouragement from Johnson it would have occurred to my mind to declare Milton to be the greatest master of free verse in our language. What is interesting about Johnson's paragraph, however, is that it represents the judgment of a man who had by no means a deaf ear, but simply a *specialized* ear, for verbal music. Within the limits of the poetry of his own period, Johnson is a very good judge of the relative merits of several poets as writers of blank verse. But on the whole, the blank verse of his age might more properly be called unrhymed verse; and nowhere is this difference more evident than in the verse of his own tragedy *Irene*: the phrasing is admirable, the style elevated and correct, but each line cries out for a companion to rhyme with it.[41] Indeed, it is only with labour, or by occasional inspiration, or by submission to the influence of the older dramatists, that the blank verse of the nineteenth[42†] century succeeds in making the absence of rhyme inevitable and right, with the rightness of Milton. Even Johnson admitted that he could not wish that Milton had been a rhymer.[43] Nor did the nineteenth century succeed in giving to blank verse the flexibility which it needs if the tone of common speech, talking of the topics of common intercourse, is to be employed; so that when our more modern practitioners of blank verse do not touch the sublime, they frequently sink to[44†] the ridiculous. Milton perfected non-dramatic blank verse and at the same time imposed limitations, very hard to break, upon the use to which it may be put if its greatest musical possibilities are to be exploited.[45†]

I come at last to compare my own attitude, as that of a poetical practitioner perhaps typical of a generation twenty-five years ago, with my attitude to-day. I have thought it well to take matters in the order in which I have taken them[46†] to discuss first the censures and detractions which I believe to have permanent validity, and which were best made by Johnson, in order to make clearer the causes, and the justification, for hostility to Milton on the part of poets at a particular juncture. And I wished to make clear those excellences of Milton which particularly impress me, before explaining why I think that the study of his verse might at last be of benefit to poets.

I have on several occasions suggested, that the important changes in the idiom of English verse which are represented by the names of Dryden and Wordsworth, may be characterized as successful attempts to escape from a poetic idiom which had ceased to have a relation to contemporary speech. This is the sense of Wordsworth's Prefaces. By the beginning of the present

century another revolution in idiom – and such revolutions bring with them an alteration of metric, a new appeal to the ear – was due. It inevitably happens that the young poets engaged in such a revolution will exalt the merits of those poets of the past who offer them example and stimulation, and cry down the merits[47†] of poets who do not stand for the qualities which they are zealous to realize. This is not only inevitable, it is right. It is even right, and certainly inevitable, that their practice, still more influential than their critical pronouncements, should attract their own readers to the poets by whose work they have been influenced. Such influence has certainly contributed to the taste (if we can distinguish the *taste* from the *fashion*) for Donne.[48†] I do not think that any modern poet, unless in a fit of irresponsible peevishness, has ever denied Milton's consummate powers. And it must be said that Milton's diction is not a poetic diction in the sense of being a debased currency: when he violates the English language he is imitating nobody, and he is inimitable. But Milton does, as I have said, represent poetry at the extreme limit from prose; and it was one of our tenets that verse should have the virtues of prose, that diction should become assimilated to cultivated contemporary speech, before aspiring to the elevation of poetry.[49] Another tenet was that the subject-matter and the imagery of poetry should be extended to topics and objects related to the life of a modern man or woman; that we were to seek the non-poetic, to seek even material refractory to transmutation into poetry, and words and phrases which had not been used in poetry before. And the study of Milton could be of no help here:[50†] it was only a hindrance.

We cannot, in literature, any more than in the rest of life, live in a perpetual state of revolution. If every generation of poets made it their task to bring poetic diction up to date with the spoken language, poetry would fail in one of its most important obligations. For poetry should help, not only to refine the language of the time, but to prevent it from changing too rapidly: a development of language at too great a speed would be a development in the sense of a progressive deterioration, and that is our danger to-day. If the poetry of the rest of this century takes the line of development which seems to me, reviewing the progress of poetry through the last three centuries, the right course, it will discover new and more elaborate patterns of a diction now established. In this search it might have much to learn from Milton's extended verse structure; it might also avoid the danger of a *servitude* to colloquial speech and to current jargon. It might also learn that the music of verse is strongest in poetry which has a definite

meaning expressed in the properest words. Poets might be led to admit that a knowledge of the literature of their own language, with a knowledge of the literature and the grammatical construction of other languages, is a very valuable part of the poet's equipment. And they might, as I have already hinted, devote some study to Milton as, outside the theatre, the greatest master in our language of freedom within form. A study of *Samson* should sharpen anyone's appreciation of the justified irregularity, and put him on guard against the pointless irregularity. In studying *Paradise Lost* we come to perceive that the verse is continuously animated by the departure from, and return to, the regular measure; and that, in comparison with Milton, hardly any subsequent writer of blank verse appears to exercise any freedom at all. We can also be led to the reflection that a monotony of unscannable verse fatigues the attention even more quickly than a monotony of exact feet. In short, it now seems to me that poets are sufficiently liberated from Milton's reputation,[51†] to approach the study of his work without danger, and with profit to their poetry and to the English language.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The following pages from *Milton1947* (14-18) were omitted in *OPP*:

I now come to the point at which it is desirable to quote passages in illustration of what I have been saying about Milton's versification. It is best, I think, to take familiar passages, rather than to seek originality by choosing those which have been less often drawn to our attention. The first is the Invocation which opens Book III of *Paradise Lost*.

Hail, holy light, of spring of Heav'n first-born,
Or of th' Eternal Coeternal beam
May I express thee unblam'd? Since God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from Eternitie, dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal stream,
Whose Fountain who shall tell? before the Sun,
Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a Mantle didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless infinite. [III.1-12][52]

This passage is compact of Miltonic philosophy, but for that I must refer you to such critics as Professor Saurat and Mr. Lewis. For my purpose, it illustrates, first, Milton's power in the use of imagery of light. Second, it illustrates the closeness of the structure. If we were to attempt to analyse the Miltonic music line by line, that music would be lost: the individual line is right, not

merely in itself, not merely in relation to the lines immediately preceding and following, but in relation to every other line in the passage. To extract this passage of twelve lines is to mutilate it. I contrast with this passage the following. In what I have just read there is no divagation from the point; the next passage is chosen to show Milton's skill in extending a period by introducing imagery which tends to distract us from the real subject.

> Thus Satan talking to his neerest Mate
> With Head up-lift above the wave, and Eyes
> That sparkling blaz'd, his other Parts besides
> Prone on the Flood, extended long and large
> Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
> As whom the Fables name of monstrous size,
> *Titanian* or *Earth-born*, that warr'd on *Jove*,
> *Briarios* or *Typhon*, whom the Den
> By ancient *Tarsus* held, or that Sea-beast
> *Leviathan*, which God of all his works
> Created hugest that swim th' Ocean stream:
> Him haply slumbring on the *Norway* foam
> The Pilot of some small night-founder'd Skiff,[53*]
> Deeming some Island, oft, as Sea-men tell,
> With fixed Anchor in his skaly rind
> Moors by his side under the Lee, while Night
> Invests the Sea, and wished Morn delayes:
> So stretcht out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay
> Chain'd on the burning Lake. . . . [I.192-210]

There are, as often with Milton, criticisms of detail which could be made. I am not too happy about eyes that both blaze and sparkle, unless Milton meant us to imagine a roaring fire ejecting sparks: and that is *too* fiery an image for even supernatural eyes. The fact that the lake was burning somewhat diminishes the effect of the fiery eyes; and it is difficult to imagine a burning lake in a scene where there was only darkness visible. But with this kind of inconsistency we are familiar in Milton.[54†] What I wish to call to your attention is the happy introduction of so much extraneous matter. Any writer, straining for images of hugeness, might have thought of the whale, but only Milton could have included the anecdote of the deluded seamen without our wanting to put a blue pencil through it. We *nearly* forget Satan in attending to the story of the whale; Milton recalls us just in time. Therefore the diversion strengthens, instead of weakening, the passage. Milton plays exactly the same trick a few lines further on, when he speaks of Satan's shield:

> the broad circumference
> Hung on his shoulders like the Moon, whose Orb
> Through Optic Glass the *Tuscan* Artist views
> At Ev'ning from the top of *Fesole*,
> Or in *Valdarno*, to descry new Lands,
> Rivers or Mountains in her spotty Globe.
> His Spear, to equal which the tallest pine

Hewn on *Norwegian* hills, to be the Mast
Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand. . . . [I.286-94]

Here I think that the two sudden transitions, to the Tuscan astronomer and thence to the Norwegian pine, followed by the concentrated astonishing image of sea-power, are most felicitous. If I may put it in this way without being misunderstood, I find in such passages a kind of inspired *frivolity*, an enjoyment by the author in the exercise of his own virtuosity, which is a mark of the first rank of genius. Addison, whose opinion is quoted and confirmed by Johnson, said that *Paradise Lost* is "universally and perpetually interesting"; the two critics found the source of this perpetual interest in the subject matter; but the assertion of Johnson that "All mankind will, through all ages, bear the same relation to Adam and to Eve, and must partake of that good and evil which extend to themselves,"[55] even when it commands the assent of the Christian believer, will not wholly account for the absorbed attention which I think any poetry lover today ought to be able to give to the poem from end to end. I find the reason more certainly in the extraordinary style which because of its perpetual variety compels us to curiosity to know what is coming next, and in the perpetual surprises of reference such as those I have just quoted.

It may be observed also, that Milton employs devices of eloquence and of the word-play in which poets of his time were practised, which perpetually relieve the mind, and facilitate the declamation. Frequently the same word is happily repeated.

My sentence is for open Warr: Of Wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: then let those
Contrive who *need*, or when they *need*, not now.
For while they *sit contriving*, shall the rest,
Millions that stand in Arms, and longing wait
The Signal to ascend, *sit* lingring here
Heav'ns fugitives . . .[56*] [II.51-57]

To give another instance:

Receive him coming to *receive* from us
Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile,
Too much *to one*, but double how endur'd,
To one and to his image now proclaim'd? [V.778-81; TSE's italics]

He also uses alliteration, and most effectively:

Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here. [V.775]

Of such devices, none is quite original; Milton's blank verse would not have been possible without developments which had taken place in the two generations preceding; but what Milton made from what he learned is unique. Some of these devices appear in the late plays in which Shakespeare returned to realize surprising possibilities of his earliest manner:

'Tis still a dream; or else such stuff as madmen
Tongue, and brain not; either both, or nothing;
Or senseless speaking, or a speaking such
As sense cannot untie. . . .[57]

Nobly he yokes
A smiling with a sigh, as if the sigh
Was that it was, for not being such a smile;
The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly
From so divine a temple, to commix
With winds that sailors rail at.[58]

The long and involved sentence structure is conspicuously developed by Massinger, from whom Milton may have taken a hint. I quote again a passage from Massinger which I quoted long ago in an essay on that dramatist:

What though my father
Writ man before he was so, and confirm'd it,
By numbering that day no part of his life
In which he did not service to his country;
Was he to be free therefore from the laws
And ceremonious form in your decrees?
Or else because he did as much as man
In those three memorable overthrows,
At Granson, Morat, Nancy, where his master,
The warlike Charalois, with whose misfortunes
I bear his name, lost treasure, men and life,
To be excused from payment of those sums
Which (his own patrimony spent) his zeal
To serve his country forced him to take up?[59]

The talent expended upon such a construction was, of course, ill-applied to the theatre. The verse has got out of hand, for dramatic purposes; and its only possible future was through the genius of Milton.[60†]

NOTES

1. As printed in *OPP*. Sir Frederic Kenyon invited TSE to give a talk as part of the British Academy series Master-Mind Lectures on 24 May 1946. "I might possibly fit Milton in if I could be allowed to consider him in relation to Johnson's essay," TSE replied on 7 Aug. The talk was delivered on 26 Mar 1947 as the Annual Lecture on a Master Mind, Henriette Hertz Trust of the British Academy, and broadcast that evening on the BBC Third Programme. It was also delivered on 3 May at the Frick Gallery in New York and published on 23 Oct 1947 as *Milton* (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege), hereafter *Milton1947*. Written between Nov 1946 and Feb 1947, as TSE wrote to Marianne Moore on 21 Nov 1946, "I must get to work at once on my Milton lecture, ordered by the British Academy," and to Frank Morley on 13 Feb 1947, "I don't want to give them my Milton lecture (which John thinks is pretty good)."

The TS and page proofs with manuscript corrections are in King's (P18). The TS (carbon) with AMS emendations in black ink, titled "Milton," is in the Houghton: bMS Am 1691.14 (47). The emendations in this TS were incorporated in the version in *OPP*.

2. *The Rambler*, 86 (12 Jan 1751), 188. TSE modernizes "errour."

3. The exception is probably Robert Bridges, whose treatise *Milton's Prosody* (1921) is discussed later in the essay.

4. Charles Williams wrote the introduction for the World's Classics edition of *The English Poems of John Milton* (1940).

5. In *Chariot of Wrath: The Message of John Milton to Democracy at War* (London: Faber, 1942), G. Wilson Knight argues that "Milton was no democrat; his royalistic instincts were ineradicable – so was his religious fervour; Parliament and even Cromwell eventually failed him; and he was inevitably driven towards arguing for a state ruled by Christ" (62).

6†. In *Milton1947*: "a 'democrat.' And Professor Saurat"

7. TSE praised Denis Saurat's *La Pensée de Milton* (1920), translated as *Milton: Man and Thinker* (London: Jonathan Cape, [1925]), along with *Blake and Modern Thought* (1929), as having "an important place in the bibliography of these poets" (6.823). The book was reviewed by H. P. Collins in the *Criterion* of Jan 1926. In the chapter "Ontology," Saurat asserts that "Milton's God is far from the God of popular belief or even orthodox theology" (113) and goes on to illustrate this unorthodoxy through examples taken mainly from Milton's *De doctrina Christiana* and *Paradise Lost*. Saurat shows that "the Unity of God . . . is incompatible with plurality, and therefore with Trinity" (116); that "Milton speaks of the Son and no longer of God" when action appears in the world (117); and that the "creation of the Son took place on one particular day" (119). These notions are all compatible with those of the Christadelphians, a Biblical Unitarian denomination founded in the United States by John Thomas in 1848, though Saurat does not seem to use the term "Christadelphian" in his study.

In *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (London: Oxford UP, 1942), C. S. Lewis examines and takes issue with these arguments put forward by Saurat and concludes, in the chapter "The Theology of Paradise Lost," that the "heresies of *Paradise Lost* thus reduce themselves to something very small and rather ambiguous" (89).

8. In his letter to Mrs. Hester Thrale of 20 Oct 1781, Johnson wrote: "We can tell each other our complaints, and give reciprocal comfort and advice, as – not to eat too much – and – not to drink too little, and we may now and then add a few strictures of reproof: and so we may write and write till we can find another subject." *Letters of Samuel Johnson*, vol 2, ed. George Birkbeck Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), 228.

9. *Heaven – and Earth* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1938), 158

10†. No new paragraph in *Milton1947*

11. *King Stephen* is an unfinished historical drama written by Keats in 1819. The epic poem "Hyperion" (1818-19) was abandoned because, among other things, "there were too many Miltonic inversions in it," as Keats wrote to John Hamilton Reynolds on 22 Sept 1819. *The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1899), 408.

12†. In *Milton1947*: "subject-matter:"

13. From "Milton I" (5.371)

14†. No new paragraph in *Milton1947*

15†. In *Milton1947*: "wherever it is found,"

16†. In *Milton1947*: "repine"

17. "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921) (2.380). TSE quotes from the version in *Homage to John Dryden* (1924).

18†. No new paragraph in *Milton1947*

19. E. M. W. Tillyard (1889-1962), classicist, Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, and friend of TSE, made this statement in *Milton* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), 356.

20†. No new paragraph in *Milton1947*

21. TSE wrote to John Hayward on 3 Mar 1944: "The history of my critical reputation, which apparently is based entirely on two sentences, one about the relation of new literature to old, and another about an 'objective correlative' (a barbarous phrase which I shudder at) would make a fabulous narrative" (King's).

22*†. TSE's note in *Milton1947*: "On one point I should take issue with Dr. Tillyard. A little further on he quotes another phrase of mine, of earlier date: 'the Chinese Wall of Milton's blank verse.' He comments: 'It must have been an ineffective wall, for *Venice Preserved*, *All for Love*, and similar plays in blank verse were not confined by it; they owe nothing to Milton's versification.' Of course not – these were *plays*, and I have long maintained that dramatic blank verse and non-dramatic blank verse are not the same thing. The Chinese Wall there, if it existed, was erected by Shakespeare."

Tillyard, in his *Milton* (359), misquotes TSE's statement in "Notes on the Blank Verse of Christopher Marlowe" (1919): "after the erection of the Chinese Wall of Milton, blank verse has suffered not only arrest but retrogression" (2.97).

23†. In *Milton1947*: "by his applying"

24. In *Life of Milton*, Johnson wrote about *Comus*: "As a drama it is deficient. The action is not probable. . . . What deserves more reprehension is, that the prologue spoken in the wild wood by the attendant Spirit is addressed to the audience; a mode of communication so contrary to the nature of dramatic representation, that no precedents can support it" (*Lives* 67). And later: "If 'Paradise Regained' has been too much depreciated, 'Sampson Agonistes' has in requital been too much admired. It could only be by long prejudice, and the bigotry of learning, that Milton could prefer the ancient tragedies, with their encumbrance of a chorus, to the exhibitions of the French and English stages; and it is only by a blind confidence in the reputation of Milton, that a drama can be praised in which the intermediate parts have neither cause nor consequence, neither hasten nor retard the catastrophe" (75-76). About *Lycidas* he says that "the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing. What beauty there is we must therefore seek in the sentiments and images" (65).

25. *The Spectator*, No. 297 (9 Feb 1712): "Our Language sunk under him, and was unequal to that Greatness of Soul, which furnished him with such glorious Conceptions." *Notes upon the Twelve Books of Paradise Lost: Collected from the Spectator. Written by Mr. Addison* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1719), 37.

26. *Life of Milton*, 76. TSE wrote to Sir Frederic Kenyon, who invited him to give the lecture, on 6 Sept 1946: "I assume from your silence on the point that there is no objection to my giving rather special prominence in the lecture to the views of Samuel Johnson. After all, if there is anything to be said in censure of Milton, Johnson has said it, though he also pronounced one or two adverse opinions on Milton's poetry which seem to us extremely perverse. But all subsequent controversy about Milton has been futile."

27†. No new paragraph in *Milton1947*

28†. In *Milton1947*: "while it leaves a plain statement a plain statement, has made it at the same time great poetry. In Milton there is always the maximal, never the minimal, alteration of ordinary language."

29†. In *Milton1947*: "to be good prose."

30. During his fourth year at Cambridge, Milton had planned to write an epic poem on King Arthur.

31†. In *Milton1947*: "but prototypes: if they were not set apart from ordinary humanity they would not be Adam and Eve."

32. *Paradise Lost*, II.43-283

33*†. TSE's note in *Milton1947*: "In *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, vol. xxi, 1936, pp. 32 ff."

TSE argued in "Milton I": "At no period is the visual imagination conspicuous in Milton's poetry" (5.372).

34. "Milton's poetry is far less naturalistic than Shakespeare's. He is extremely fond of all human artefacts – buildings, machinery, scientific inventions. . . . War's more mechanic and explosive qualities fascinate Milton." *Chariot of Wrath* (122).

35. "So stretcht out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay / Chain'd on the burning Lake, . . . Forthwith upright he rears from off the Pool / His mighty Stature." *Paradise Lost* I.209-10; 221-22.

36†. In *Milton1947*: "two great books by blind musicians,"

37. Robert Bridges, *Milton's Prosody: With a Chapter on Accentual Verse and Notes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1921; first printed 1889).

38*†. TSE's note in *Milton1947*: "Beyond raising one question, in connexion with Bridges's account of Milton's use of recessive accent. It does not seem to me that such recession, as of *obscéne* to *óbscene* in the line

Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons

simply reverses the value of the two syllables: I should say that the second syllable retains something of its length, and the first something of its shortness, and that the surprise and variety are due to each syllable becoming *both* long and short. The effect is like that of a tide-rip, in which a peculiar type of wave is produced by the conflict of two opposing forces."

Bridges examines the use of recession of accent in the third part of *Milton's Prosody*, entitled "On Obsolete Mannerisms," the rule being that "disyllabic adjectives and participles accented on the last syllable will shift their accent back if they occur before a noun accented on the first syllable" (67). The line from *Paradise Lost* I.406 quoted by TSE reads in Bridges: "Next Chemos, th' óbscene dread of Moabs sons" (72).

39. *Life of Milton*, 77

40†. No new paragraph in *Milton1947*

41. Johnson regarded his only play *Irene*, first performed on 6 Feb 1749, as his biggest failure.

42†. In *Milton1947*: "*nineteenth*"

43. "But, whatever be the advantages of rhyme, I cannot prevail on myself to wish that Milton had been a rhymer; for I cannot wish his work to be other than it is; yet, like other heroes, he is to be admired rather than imitated. He that thinks himself capable of astonishing may write blank verse; but those that hope only to please must condescend to rhyme." *Life of Milton* (77).

44†. In *Milton1947*: "they frequently approach"

45†. At this point in *OPP*, TSE deletes from *Milton1947* over four succeeding pages (14-18) of commentary on passages from Milton's poetry, "in illustration of what I have been saying about Milton's versification" (14). The deleted section is printed in the textual note at the end of the essay.

46†. In *Milton1947*: "I have taken them:"

47†. In *Milton1947*: "depreciate the merits"

48†. In *Milton1947*: "the taste, if we can distinguish the *taste* from the *fashion*, for Donne."

49. Ezra Pound wrote to Harriet Monroe in a letter of Jan 1915: "Poetry must be *as well written as prose*. Its language must be a fine language, departing in no way from speech save by a heightened intensity (i.e., simplicity)." *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (London: Faber, 1971), 48.

50†. In *Milton1947*: "could be of no help:"

51†. In *Milton1947*: "poets are sufficiently removed from Milton, and sufficiently liberated from his reputation,"

52. TSE's quotations are from his personal bookplate copy of *The Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. H. C. Beeching (London: Oxford UP, 1928); minor mistranscriptions and modernized spellings have been silently corrected to Beeching.

53*. TSE's note: "The term *night-foundered*, which I presume to be of Milton's invention, seems unsuitable here. Dr. Tillyard has called my attention to the use of the same adjective in *Comus*, i.483:

> Either som one like us night-foundered here

where, although extravagant, it draws a permissible comparison between travellers lost in the night, and seafarers in extremity. But when, as here in *Paradise Lost*, it is transferred from the travellers on land to adventurers by sea, and not to the men but to their *skiff*, the literal meaning of *founder* immediately presents itself. A *foundered* skiff could not be *moored*, to a whale or to anything else."

TSE wrote in a postscript to Tillyard on 3 Apr 1947: "'night-foundered' (in the comparison of Satan to Leviathan). You can hardly moor or tie up a foundered boat. Could M. have written 'nigh-foundered'? (nearly)" and to Bonamy Dobrée on 10 Nov 1947: "I don't understand your elucidation of 'night-foundered.' My point was that if it has the same meaning as in *Comus* it is still an inappropriate term to use in a nautical situation. If it means foundered in the night then the marines must either have parted company with the skiff or have been drowned in it."

54†. The following sentences in the lecture were omitted in *Milton1947*: "I suppose it is just permissible to write prone where supine seems a more suitable word; and of course supine, besides meaning lying on the back, has associated meanings which would be inappropriate. And it is possible that Milton supposed whales to have scales. These are, in any case, small blemishes" (Houghton).

TSE wrote to E. H. W. Meyerstein on 31 Mar: "Your several criticisms impressed me, and may lead to alterations in my text. I appreciate the relevant association of prone, but I am still in the dark as to the picture of Satan which I should have in my mind. I still think of him as lying on his back. The position of a man lying on his breast and raising his head to speak is much more awkward and makes a less pleasing image. Am I to infer, however, that Milton pictured him in this position?" This led to a lengthy correspondence on this topic with Meyerstein in Oct/Nov 1947 and may have prompted TSE to remove the discussion of Satan lying prone.

55. *Life of Milton*, 70. Johnson alludes to Augustine's theory of original sin.

56*. TSE's note: "It might, of course, be objected that 'millions that *stand* in arms' could not at the same time '*sit* lingring.'" (TSE's italics in the passage)

57. *Cymbeline* V.iv.145-48

58. *Cymbeline* IV.ii.52-57

59. *The Fatal Dowry* I.ii.162-175, quoted in "Philip Massinger" (1920) as "an excellent example of Massinger's syntax" (2.249).

60†. Following the deletion in *OPP* of the preceding pages (14-18) of *Milton1947*, TSE here resumes that text (18-19) in *OPP*: "I come at last to compare my own attitude . . ." (7.33 above).

UNESCO Policy [I]

To the Editor of the *Continental Daily Mail* (Paris)[1]

Continental Daily Mail (12 Nov 1947) 2

Sir, – I must apologise for asking the privilege of commenting on a letter which appeared in your columns so long ago as October 30.[2] But your issue of that date did not come into my hands immediately; one cannot approach such complicated problems without some deliberation; and the letter of the Director-General of Unesco is concerned with matters of great importance.

Dr. Huxley has set out to inform your reader of the aims of Unesco. The question which immediately presents itself, is whether these aims are not too numerous and insufficiently organised, and whether some of them are not too ambitious. In order to make my meaning clear, it is necessary to summarise my gleanings from Dr. Huxley's statement.

Dr. Huxley speaks first of the difficulty of deciding upon what he calls *top priorities* "for a body concerned with education, science and culture in all parts of a world in which schools and universities had been destroyed, laboratories and libraries wrecked," etc.[3]

One would at first be tempted to infer that the aims of Unesco were to assist the ravaged countries to repair the damage to their education, science and culture. That aim alone would be enough; it indicates an immense task; and if Unesco can realise this aim its director and staff will earn the highest praise.

But Dr. Huxley does not actually tell us whether such work is a "top priority"; though he does say, in his next paragraph, that "help had to be given to the educational systems of those countries which had suffered most through Axis aggression."[4] (The countries which suffered most, in Europe, from *Axis* aggression are, I believe, Poland, Russia and Greece: we should be interested to know what kind of help, in restoring their educational systems, would be accepted by Russia, or permitted in Poland).

It would seem, though we are not explicitly told so, that it is the task of Unesco to allocate the $72,000,000 raised by voluntary organisations in the U.S.A. for these purposes. If this is so, we should be interested to learn what amounts of money have been contributed by countries other than the U.S.A., and where and how all these funds are being used.[5]

But Dr. Huxley passes on to touch upon other activities of Unesco: the organisation of international conferences and of "Field Science Co-operation Offices, which are being set up first in Rio de Janeiro, Cairo and Nanking."[6]

He then tells us that a *first concern* of Unesco must be "the production of international understanding."[7] In his next paragraph he tells us that Unesco has carried out a survey of the technical needs of war-devastated countries in the area of "Mass Communication."

In his next, he touches upon still another aim: to raise educational standards in those countries (and we ask again what can be done in Poland? – I say Poland, as I assume that "war-devastated countries" means *countries devastated by the Axis*.)[8]

To raise educational standards is a different thing from helping to *restore* the previously existing machinery of education: that is why I call it another aim.

We should like to know what "raising educational standards" means; but Dr. Huxley proceeds to another, and still more ambitious aim; or, to be accurate, he calls it a *cornerstone*. It is the campaign against illiteracy – nothing less, apparently, than the aim to teach every human being in the world to read and write.[9]

And at the end, to complete our confusion, he sums up by quoting Sir John Maud (an authority, it would seem, with a still greater mastery of vagueness than Dr. Huxley) who declares that "the four main fields of activity *seem to be* (italics mine)[10] these: The raising of standards in education, science and culture; the meeting of men and minds; education for international understanding; and the helping of 'Man in the Modern World' to become 'Man in One World.'"[11]

After being told of so many, and such various aims; after being pelted with *top priorities*, *first concerns* and *cornerstones*: is not the mind of any reader left in the darkness of primaeval chaos?

The only "aim" that I have been able to understand – and I hope it *is* an aim – is the aim to help devastated countries to rebuild their schoolhouses, train and pay their teachers, and equip the children with books, writing materials and other necessaries.

It is an unhappy fact that children cannot be educated unless they are also clothed and fed and healed of their ailments; but even if Unesco can concern itself only with direct educational needs, and if it does supply them, then Unesco deserves our support.

Such needs seem to me so fundamental and so urgent that the entire resources of Unesco could at present be devoted to them; and that is why I deprecate grandiose and cloudy schemes for "producing international understanding" – and even the more definite, but still less urgent task of teaching the inhabitants of Haiti and British East Africa to read and write.[12]

Yours, etc.,
T. S. ELIOT

24, Russell Square. London, W.C.1.

NOTES

1. TSE's letter appears under the heading "Are Unesco's aims too vague and ambitious?" He had previously taken issue with other aspects of UNESCO in his letters to the *Times* (7.9, 19).

2. Julian Huxley's letter, written in anticipation of the UNESCO conference in Mexico City on 6 Nov, was printed under the heading "Unesco: why it was formed and what it aims to do" for readers of the *Continental Daily Mail*, "with its very wide circulation in nearly all the countries of Europe." It appeared in the issue of 30 Oct 1947 (4), the day on which the Paris editor Noel Barber wrote TSE to thank him for "your kind offer to write on Unesco," enclosing a copy of Huxley's article: "Would you care to comment on a letter which Julian Huxley wrote for me on Unesco in this morning's Continental Daily Mail?" TSE's letter, dated 9 Nov, also appeared in the London *Daily Mail*. Barber broke the five paragraphs of the typescript into shorter journalistic paragraphs. All of TSE's underlinings for emphasis in the typescript were italicized; his pencil underscorings in Huxley's letter are noted.

3. TSE underscored "top priorities" in Huxley's text.

4. TSE double-scored this sentence in the margin of Huxley's text.

5. Huxley stated: "This work of reconstruction was the first of Unesco's tasks to get off the mark. Already the U.S. voluntary organisations alone, in close co-operation with the Commission for International Educational Reconstruction, have raised more than $72,000,000" (4).

6. "Field Science Co-operation offices are being set up in parts of the world where scientific information is hard to obtain. The first of these are situated in Rio de Janeiro, Cairo and Nanking; a fourth will shortly open in India" (4).

7. TSE underscored "first concern" in Huxley's text.

8. "It will be seen that Unesco's attempts to raise educational standards and the standards of mass media both began in the war-devastated countries – and for the same reason" (4).

9. "One of the cornerstones already laid by Unesco in connection with its work for education has been the beginnings of its campaign against illiteracy" (4). TSE underscored "cornerstones" in Huxley's text.

10. TSE underscored "four main fields of activity" from the quotation in Huxley's text.

11. Huxley quotes the British diplomat Sir John Primatt Redcliffe-Maud (1906-82), one of the founding fathers of UNESCO, who made this statement as a member of the British Delegation for the program of the second General Conference that opened in Mexico City on 6 Nov.

12. When outlining his "campaign against illiteracy," Huxley pointed out that "experimental work is already being started in Haiti, in China and British East Africa" (4).

A Personal Anthology. Poetry broadcast with John Laurie

On 13 Nov 1947, TSE teamed up with the Scottish actor John Laurie (1897-1980), a noted verse speaker known for his numerous Shakespearean roles and diverse range of parts on stage, radio, film, and television. The program, introduced as TSE's "personal choice of poems," was arranged by the poet and BBC producer Patric Dickinson (1914-94) and broadcast on the Third Programme from 8:35 to 9:05 p.m. After Dickinson first suggested the program in July, TSE sent on 10 Sept a list of poems and their line lengths, followed by a draft of his script on 30 Sept. Considering the recitation of two Scots poems on the list, "Bonny Dundee" and "Thirty Bob a Week," TSE wrote to Dickinson on 6 Oct: "The only reciter I know of who might do these two poems satisfactorily is John Laurie." TSE anonymously donated the BBC payment of 50 guineas to the Society of the Sacred Mission in Kelham.

ELIOT: If you were given the opportunity of choosing six or a dozen English poems to be read aloud, how would you set about it? You might of course limit yourself to sonnets, or to lyrics intended to be set to music, or to poems about death, or about love. The one thing you could not do would be to choose your "favourite poems." One has too many favourite poems, and poems one favours at different times and in different moods; and some of them would be too long. And the more I try to discover which English poems I can consider "favourites," the less meaning I find in the word "favourite" itself. So, for this occasion, I chose to perform the experiment of trying to think of poems which had stuck in my memory, without my having made any effort to memorise them, for a good many years – in fact, further back than I could remember. They would some of them be poems I remembered entire, and some of them poems of which I only remembered a few lines; but they would all be poems which came back to my mind in those moments of vacancy which are more frequent than we like to admit, in the same way that a melody, or a jingle suddenly recurs. I refuse however to call them "favourite" poems. Why we all have our minds filled with items of this kind, and why our minds have selected these things to remember, remains not wholly explainable. Why I have chosen these poems is therefore a mystery to myself. The listener is in as good a position to explain it as I am. There are no doubt causes wholly personal to myself: I shall leave them to those listeners who delight in psycho-analytic puzzles.

But beyond these, I believe that in each of the poems I have chosen, there is either a peculiar tone, as of a living man speaking to you in private, or a peculiar rhythmical effect, be it only in one line, which has excited me and which no other combination of words than that particular line could give.

I must however add, that even on these principles of selection, more poems come to mind than could possibly be read in the time we have for such a pastime. I therefore put my mind on one period of English poetry after another, from the time of Queen Elizabeth to the end of the nineteenth century, and took the first poems that came to my mind out of each period. No, even by this method, I have not been able to take all the first comers. Some of them were too long; my first visitor from the Romantic Age was Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence," which I discarded for that reason.[1]

I find two from the Elizabethan Age. The first is a poem by Thomas Campion, and by no means one of his best known. It is not out of his "Books of Airs," but from a treatise called "Observations on the Art of English Poesie." In that treatise he discusses the possibilities of writing English verse in classical quantity and metre, and illustrates his theory by a few exercises. Such a poem is a curiosity; but to my mind Campion – a musician as well as a poet – was more successful in these few pieces than any other English poet who has made the same experiment.[2]

LAURIE:

Rose-cheeked Laura, come;
Sing thou smoothly with thy beauty's
Silent music, either other
  Sweetly gracing.

Lovely forms do flow
From concent divinely framed;
Heav'n is music, and thy beauty's
  Birth is heavenly.

These dull notes we sing
Discords need for helps to grace them;
Only beauty purely loving
  Knows no discord,

But still moves delight,
Like clear springs renewed by flowing,

Ever perfect, ever in them-
selves eternal.

ELIOT: I have taken one other poem from the same period, a sonnet. It is not one of the best known sonnets; it is from a sequence by Drayton called "Idea." I think that what has impressed this sonnet upon my memory is that, within the conventional framework of the love sonnet of the period, he suddenly recalls, and mentions in a wholly informal conversational tone, certain historical events which he has lived through.[3]

LAURIE:

Calling to mind, since first my love begunne,
Th' incertaine times oft varying in their course,
How things still unexpectedly have runne,
As please the fates, by their resistlesse force:
Lastly, mine eyes amazedly have seene
Essex great fall, Tyrone his peace to gaine,
The quiet end of that long-living Queene,
This Kings faire entrance, and our peace with Spaine,
We and the Dutch at length our selves to sever.
Thus the world doth, and evermore shall reele;
Yet to my goddesse am I constant ever,
How ere blind fortune turns her girdle wheele:
Though heaven and earth prove both to me untrue,
Yet am I still inviolate to you.

ELIOT: Now I skip to Dryden. What one chiefly remembers of Dryden are passages in long poems, but his lines on the death of his friend the poet Oldham make a very fine elegy.[4]

LAURIE:

Farewell, too little, and too lately known,
Whom I began to think, and call my own:
For sure our souls were near allied, and thine
Cast in the same poetic mould with mine,
One common note on either lyre did strike,
And knaves and fools we both abhorred alike.
To the same goal did both our studies drive;

The last set out the soonest did arrive.
Thus Nisus fell upon the slippery place,
Whilst his young friend performed, and won the race.
Oh early ripe! To thy abundant store
What could advancing age have added more?
It might (what nature never gives the young)
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.
But satire needs not those, and wit will shine
Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line.
A noble error, and but seldom made,
When poets are by too much force betrayed.
Thy generous fruits, though gathered ere their prime,
Still showed a quickness; and maturing time
But mellows what we write to the dull sweets of rhyme.
Once more, hail, and farewell; farewell, thou young
But ah! Too short? Marcellus of our tongue!
Thy brows with ivy and with laurels bound;
But fate and gloomy night encompass thee around.

ELIOT: It may be by a very obvious transition that my mind leapt from these lines to another elegy in a very different mood, though almost more moving. And if anyone assumes that the style of verse is a complete monotony from Dryden to Samuel Johnson, let him consider this poem of Johnson's in honour of the memory of a humble friend.[5]

LAURIE:

Condemn'd to hope's delusive mine,
As on we toil from day to day,
By sudden blasts, or slow decline,
Our social comforts drop away.

Well tried through many a varying year,
See Levet to the grave descend;
Officious, innocent, sincere,
Of ev'ry friendless name the friend.

Yet still he fills affection's eye,
Obscurely wise and coarsely kind;

Nor, letter'd arrogance, deny
  Thy praise to merit unrefin'd.

When fainting nature call'd for aid,
  And hov'ring death prepar'd the blow,
His vigorous remedy display'd
  The power of art without the show.

In misery's darkest cavern known,
  His useful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeless anguish pour'd his groan,
  And lonely want retir'd to die.

No summons mock'd by chill delay,
  No petty gain disdain'd by pride,
The modest wants of ev'ry day
  The toil of every day supplied.

His virtues walk'd their narrow round,
  Nor made a pause, nor left a void;
And sure th' Eternal Master found
  The single talent well employ'd.

The busy day, the peaceful night,
  Unfelt, uncounted, glided by;
His frame was firm, his powers were bright,
  Tho' now his eightieth year was nigh.

Then with no fiery, throbbing pain,
  No cold gradations of decay,
Death broke at once the vital chain,
  And free'd his soul the nearest way.

ELIOT: The next leap cannot be so plausibly explained. As poetry nothing could be more different: it may be that the thought of one Jacobite led to another. This is Walter Scott's "Bonny Dundee":[6]

LAURIE:

To the Lords of Convention 'twas Claver'se who spoke,
"Ere the King's crown shall fall there are crowns to be broke;

So let each Cavalier who loves honour and me,
Come follow the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
[Chorus:]
"Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Come saddle your horses, and call up your men;
Come open the West Port, and let me gang free,
And it's room for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!"

Dundee he is mounted, he rides up the street,
The bells are rung backward, the drums they are beat;
But the Provost, douce man, said, "Just e'en let him be,
The Gude Town is weel quit of that Deil of Dundee."

As he rode down the sanctified bends of the Bow,
Ilk carline was flyting and shaking her pow;
But the young plants of grace they look'd couthie and slee,
Thinking, luck to thy bonnet, thou Bonny Dundee!

With sour-featured Whigs the Grassmarket was cramm'd
As if half the West had set tryst to be hang'd;
There was spite in each look, there was fear in each e'e,
As they watch'd for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee.

These cowls of Kilmarnock had spits and had spears,
And lang-hafted gullies to kill Cavaliers;
But they shrunk to close-heads, and the causeway was free,
At the toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

He spurr'd to the foot of the proud Castle rock,
And with the gay Gordon he gallantly spoke;
"Let Mons Meg and her marrows speak twa words or three,
For the love of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee."

The Gordon demands of him which way he goes –
"Where'er shall direct me the shade of Montrose!
Your Grace in short space shall hear tidings of me,
Or that low lies the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

"There are hills beyond Pentland and lands beyond Forth,
If there's lords in the Lowlands, there's chiefs in the North;
There are wild Duniewassals three thousand times three,
Will cry *hoigh!* For the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

"There's brass on the target of barken'd bull-hide;
There's steel in the scabbard that dangles beside;
The brass shall be burnish'd, the steel shall flash free,
At a toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

"Away to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks –
Ere I own an usurper, I'll couch with the fox;
And tremble, false Whigs, in the midst of your glee,
You have not seen the last of my bonnet and me!"

He waved his proud hand, and the trumpets were blown,
The kettle-drums clash'd, and the horsemen rode on,
Till on Ravelston's cliffs and on Clermiston's lee,
Died away the wild war-notes of Bonny Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Come saddle the horses and call up the men,
Come open your gates, and let me gae free,
For it's up with the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!

ELIOT: From one point of view, the nearest parallel to "Bonny Dundee" is "Ole Man River": what "Ole Man River" is to the genuine negro spiritual, so is "Bonnie Dundee" to the genuine Jacobite song of its period.[7] But I do not intend to include "Ole Man River," and I should add, that while Dryden may have led me to a poem by Johnson, and Johnson to a poem by Scott, all of these poems are poems which come back to my mind independently of each other, when I am waiting for a train, or travelling in a bus, or sitting in a dentist's waiting-room, and on innumerable other occasions.

I have said that I have omitted Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence." The only other poem that emerges from the Romantic Age is a short poem by Shelley. Shelley did not intend it to be so short. He started another stanza, and left it unfinished. Perhaps he could not accommodate himself to the fact that a poem can be very short indeed and yet be complete. Here are the six lines: and I think they form the most perfect short poem that Shelley wrote.[8]

LAURIE:

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless

Among the stars that have a different birth,
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?

ELIOT: I surprised myself by finding that Victorian poetry proper is not represented at all. The nearest to a representative is a poem by Edgar Poe. Like all of his poems, it just escapes being nonsense; like all of his poems it is, when you take it to pieces, very undistinguished writing; and yet there is a rhythm, an idiom, which remains permanently in the mind once it has caught your attention.[9]

LAURIE:

Thank Heaven! The crisis–
  The danger is past,
And the lingering illness
  Is over at last–
And the fever called "Living"
  Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know
  I am shorn of my strength,
And no muscle I move
  As I lie at full length–
But no matter! – I feel
  I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly,
  Now, in my bed,
That any beholder
  Might fancy me dead–
Might start at beholding me,
  Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
  The sighing and sobbing,
Are quieted now,
  With that horrible throbbing
At heart: – ah, that horrible,
  Horrible throbbing!

The sickness – the nausea–
  The pitiless pain–
Have ceased, with the fever
  That maddened my brain–
With the fever called "Living"
  That burned in my brain.

And oh! of all tortures
  That torture the worst
Has abated – the terrible
  Torture of thirst,
For the napthaline river
  Of Passion accurst: –
I have drank of a water
  That quenches all thirst:–

Of a water that flows,
  With a lullaby sound,
From a spring but a very few
  Feet under ground–
From a cavern not very far
  Down under ground.

And ah! let it never
  Be foolishly said
That my room it is gloomy
  And narrow my bed;
For man never slept
  In a different bed –
And, to *sleep*, you must slumber
  In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit
  Here blandly reposes,
Forgetting, or never
  Regretting its roses–
Its old agitations
  Of myrtles and roses:

For now, while so quietly
  Lying, it fancies

A holier odour
  About it, of pansies–
A rosemary odour,
  Commingled with pansies–
With rue and the beautiful
  Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
  Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
  And the beauty of Annie–
Drowned in a bath
  Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
  She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently
  To sleep on her breast –
Deeply to sleep
  From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished,
  She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
  To keep me from harm –
To the queen of the angels
  To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly,
  Now in my bed,
(Knowing her love)
  That you fancy me dead–
And I rest so contentedly,
  Now in my bed,
(With her love at my breast)
  That you fancy me dead–
That you shudder to look at me,
  Thinking me dead:–

But my heart it is brighter
  Than all of the many

Stars in the sky,
  For it sparkles with Annie–
It glows with the light –
  Of the love of my Annie–
With the thought of the light
  Of the eyes of my Annie.

ELIOT: After listening to Poe, your ears should be prepared for two poems of the kind which I call thumpers: a crude monotonous beat as far as possible from the subtle distortion of regular rhythm in the poem of Shelley's which you have heard. The first is Kipling's "Danny Deever," which I knew by heart when I was ten, and which I have never forgotten.[10]

LAURIE:

"What are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-on-Parade.
"To turn you out, to turn you out," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"What makes you look so white, so white?" said Files-on-Parade.
"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch," the Colour-Sergeant said.
  For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can hear the Dead March play,
  The Regiment's in 'ollow square – they're hangin' him to-day;
  They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,
  An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.
"What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"What makes that front-rank man fall down?" said Files-on-Parade.
"A touch o' sun, a touch o' sun," the Colour-Sergeant said.
  They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round,
  They 'ave 'alted Danner Deever by 'is coffin on the ground;
  An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin' shootin' hound –
  O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

"'is cot was right-'and cot to mine," said Files-on-Parade.
"E's sleepin' out an' far to-night," the Colour Sergeant said.
"I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times," said Files-on-Parade.
"E's drinking' bitter beer alone," the Colour-Sergeant said.
  They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is place,
  For 'e shot a comrade sleepin' – you must look 'im in the face;

Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the Regiment's disgrace,
While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What's that so black agin the sun?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"What's that that whimpers over 'ead?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny's soul that's passin' now," the Colour-Sergeant said.
For they're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the quickstep play,
The Regiment's in column, an' they're marchin' us away;
Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll want their beer to-day,
After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

ELIOT: That was a poem which you all probably knew: I dare say that many listeners' memories were able to keep them a line or two ahead of the reader. Here is a poem of the same period which probably very few of you know. John Davidson was a Scottish poet, of the London nineties, who had genius but the incapacity for perfection. This poem is I think his one great achievement, and I know nothing quite like it.[11]

LAURIE:

I couldn't touch a stop and turn a screw,
And set the blooming world a-work for me,
Like such as cut their teeth – I hope, like you –
On the handle of a skeleton gold key;
I cut mine on a leek, which I eat it every week:
I'm a clerk at thirty bob as you can see.

But I don't allow it's luck and all a toss;
There's no such thing as being starred and crossed;
It's just the power of some to be a boss,
And the bally power of others to be bossed:
I face the music, sir; you bet I ain't a cur;
Strike me lucky if I don't believe I'm lost!

For like a mole I journey in the dark,
A-travelling along the underground
From my Pillar'd Halls and broad Suburbean Park,
To come the daily dull official round;
And home again at night with my pipe all alight,
A-scheming how to count ten bob a pound.

And it's often very cold and very wet,
  And my missis stitches towels for a hunks;
And the Pillar'd Halls is half of it to let –
  Three rooms about the size of travelling trunks.
And we cough, my wife and I, to dislocate a sigh,
  When the noisy little kids are in their bunks.

But you never hear her do a growl or whine,
  For she's made of flint and roses, very odd;
And I've got to cut my meaning rather fine,
  Or I'd blubber, for I'm made of greens and sod:
So p'r'aps we are in Hell for all that I can tell,
  And lost and damn'd and served up hot to God.

I ain't blaspheming, Mr. Silver-tongue;
  I'm saying things a bit beyond your art:
Of all the rummy starts you ever sprung,
  Thirty bob a week's the rummiest start!
With your science and your books and your the'ries about spooks,
  Did you ever hear of looking in your heart?

I didn't mean your pocket, Mr.; no:
  I mean that having children and a wife,
With thirty bob on which to come and go,
  Isn't dancing to the tabor and the fife:
When it doesn't make you drink, by Heaven! It makes you think,
  And notice curious items about life.

I step into my heart and there I meet
  A god-almighty devil singing small,
Who would like to shout and whistle in the street,
  And squelch the passers flat against the wall;
If the whole world was a cake he had the power to take,
  He would take it, ask for more, and eat it all.

And I meet a sort of simpleton beside,
  The kind that life is always giving beans;
With thirty bob a week to keep a bride
  He fell in love and married in his teens:
At thirty bob he stuck; but he knows it isn't luck:
  He knows the seas are deeper than tureens.

And the god-almighty devil and the fool
That meet me in the High Street on the strike,
When I walk about my heart a-gathering wool,
Are my good and evil angels if you like,
And both of them together in every kind of weather
Ride me like a double-seated bike.

That's rough a bit and needs its meaning curled,
But I have a high old hot un in my mind –
A most engrugious notion of the world,
That leaves your lightning 'rithmetic behind:
I give it at a glance when I say "There ain't no chance,
Nor nothing of the lucky-lottery kind."

And it's this way that I make it out to be:
No fathers, mothers, countries, climates – none;
Not Adam was responsible for me,
Nor society, nor systems, nary one:
A little sleeping seed, I woke – I did, indeed –
A million years before the blooming sun.

I woke because I thought the time had come;
Beyond my will there was no other cause;
And everywhere I found myself at home,
Because I chose to be the thing I was;
And in whatever shape of mollusc or of ape
I always went according to the laws.

I was the love that chose my mother out;
I joined two lives and from the union burst;
My weakness and my strength without a doubt
Are mine alone for ever from the first:
It's just the very same with a difference in the name
As "Thy will be done." You say it if you durst!

They say it daily up and down the land
As easy as you take a drink, it's true;
But the difficultest go to understand,
And the difficultest job a man can do,
Is to come it brave and meek with thirty bob a week,
And feel that that's the proper thing for you.

It's a naked child against a hungry wolf;
  It's playing bowls upon a splitting wreck;
It's walking on a string across a gulf
  With millstones fore-and-aft about your neck;
But the thing is daily done by many and many a one;
  And we fall, face forward, fighting, on the deck.

ELIOT: My last poem comes from the same period. This is a short poem, and by a poet of very different kind from Davidson, that is Lionel Johnson. I do not think it is a perfect poem; there are lines in it which I should like to alter; but it is a poem – one which you do not find in anthologies – with something in it, a tone, a few lines and phrases, which re-echo in the mind for a lifetime.[12]

LAURIE:

In Merioneth, over the sad moor
  Drives the rain, the cold wind blows:
  Past the ruinous church door,
The poor procession without music goes.

Lonely she wandered out her hour, and died.
  Now the mournful curlew cries
  Over her, laid down beside
Death's lonely people: lightly down she lies.

In Merioneth, the wind lives and wails,
  On from hill to lonely hill:
  Down the loud, triumphant gales,
A spirit cries *Be strong!* and cries *Be still!*

NOTES

1. Though TSE included the 120-line "Resolution and Independence" (1807) in his original list, on 20 Sept he agreed to Dickinson's recommendation to omit the poem and merely mention it in the script as a personal preference to keep the program within its time limit. In "Wordsworth and Coleridge" (1933) TSE wrote: "I believe that you will understand a great poem like 'Resolution and Independence' better if you understand the purposes and social passions which animated its author; and unless you understand these you will misread Wordsworth's literary criticism entirely" (4.629).

2. TSE chose "Rose-cheeked Laura," featured by Campion in illustration of his theory of quantitative verse in *Observations in the Art of English Poesy* (1602), which TSE possessed in the

Muses' Library edition (London: A. H. Bullen, 1903). The poem appears in "The eighth Chapter, of ditties and odes," "which we may call lyrical, because they are apt to be sung to an instrument, if they were adorned with convenient notes" (256). Campion describes this poem as one that "consists of dimetre, whose first foot may either be a spondee or a trochee. The two verses following are both of them trochaical, and consist of four feet, the first of either of them being a spondee or trochee, the other three only trochees. The fourth and last verse is made of two trochees. The number is voluble and fit to express any amorous conceit" (258).

3. Michael Drayton's Sonnet 51 first appeared in this form in the 1605 edition of *Idea*, his sonnet sequence written mostly in praise of "Idea," the poetic name for the object of his love, his "goddesse" Anne Goodere, Lady Rainsford. Begun in 1594 as *Idea's Mirror*, the sequence of sixty-three sonnets was published in final form in *Poems by Michael Drayton Esquyer* (1619). In reviewing George Wyndham's *Essays in Romantic Literature* in "A Romantic Aristocrat" (1919), TSE states that Wyndham "speaks a few words for Drayton, but has not noticed that the only good lines (with the exception of one sonnet which may be an accident) in Drayton's dreary sequence of *Ideas* occurs when Drayton drops his costume for a moment and talks in terms of actuality"; he then quotes (modernized) lines 5-8 of the sonnet (2.29).

4. TSE concluded his first essay on John Dryden (1921) by quoting in full "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham," from *The Remains of Mr. John Oldham in Verse and Prose* (1684): "Let us take as a final test his elegy upon Oldham, which deserves not to be mutilated . . . From the perfection of such an elegy we cannot detract; the lack of suggestiveness is compensated by the satisfying completeness of the statement. . . . In the next revolution of taste it is possible that poets may turn to the study of Dryden. He remains one of those who have set standards for English verse which it is desperate to ignore" (2.358-59). For the BBC reading, TSE has modernized the text in his personal bookplate copy of *The Poems of John Dryden*, ed. John Sargeaunt (London: Oxford UP, 1929), 178.

5. In "Johnson as Critic and Poet" (1944), TSE wrote of Johnson's elegy for his apothecary friend of thirty-six years, Robert Levet (sometimes Levett, 1705-82), "On the Death of Mr. Robert Levet, A Practiser in Physic" (1782): "The only one, I think, of Johnson's short poems which is more than neat and elegant, the only one which does what no one before him could have done and which no successor could emulate, is the poem on the death of Dr. Levett, the man 'obscurely wise and coarsely kind' – a poem unique in tenderness, piety and wisdom" (8.200-01). TSE takes the text, with minor mistranscriptions, from his personal copy of the *Poems of Samuel Johnson*, eds. David Nichol Smith and Edward L. McAdam (Oxford: Clarendon, 1941), 200-02.

6. Written in 1825 in honor of John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee (1648-89), nicknamed "Bonny Dundee," leader of the 1689 Jacobite rising in which he was killed. The poem was included as a song in Scott's unperformed play, *The Doom of Devorgoil* II.ii (1830), as printed in *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1882), 759-60.

7. The lyrics of the Negro spiritual "Ol' Man River," written by Oscar Hammerstein with music by Jerome Kern, were first sung by Jules Bledsoe in the Dec 1927 stage production of *Show Boat* and were made famous by Paul Robeson in the 1936 film version ("O' man river / Dat 'ol man river, / He mus' know sumpin' / But don't say nuthin' / He jes' keeps rollin' / He keeps on rollin' along." TSE refers to Robeson's singing of the song in "Notes on the Way [II]" (1935) and confessed to Theodora Eliot Smith in 1937 that he had about St. Louis "a sentimental feeling which is excited to exaltation by *Show Boat* and *Old Man River* and all that sort of thing" (5.162, 165, n.12).

8. TSE takes the six-line stanza of Shelley's "To the Moon" from his personal bookplate copy of *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford UP, 1919), 615. The poem was first published in the "Fragments" section of the second edition of *Posthumous Poems* (1824), edited by Mary Shelley after his death in 1822. Hutchinson prints it as stanza I, followed by a two-line fragment in stanza II ("Thou chosen sister of the Spirit, / That gazes on thee till in thee it pities . . ."), added by W. M. Rossetti in his edition of *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1870).

9. "For Annie" (1849), as printed in TSE's bookplate copy of Poe's *Poems and Essays* in the Everyman's Library edition (London: Dent, 1927), 83-85, one of Poe's last poems published in the year of his death. TSE introduced the poem before reading it on an earlier broadcast, "'A Dream within a Dream': T. S. Eliot on Edgar Allan Poe" (1943): "His poem 'For Annie' has an effect of simplicity, even of artlessness, in its metre and diction, which is peculiar to Poe: it sounds at first so naïve that anyone could have written it. Only after you find that it goes on throbbing in your head, do you begin to suspect that perhaps you will never forget it" (6.360).

10. "Danny Deever" first appeared in the *Scots Observer* in 1890 and was included in Kipling's *Barrack-Room Ballads* in 1892. TSE first mentions and quotes from the poem in "Kipling Redivivus" (1919) (2.34-35) and states in his *Criterion* commentary of Apr 1936: "I believe that in a few poems – such as *Danny Deever* – he made original contribution to the verse of the language" (5.361). TSE also included the poem in his edition of *A Choice of Kipling's Verse* (1941), writing in the introduction: "One of the most interesting exercises in the combination of heavy beat and variation of pace is found in *Danny Deever*, a poem which is technically (as well as in content) remarkable. The regular recurrence of the same end-words, which gain immensely by imperfect rhyme (*parade* and *said*) gives the feeling of marching feet and the movement of men in disciplined formation – in a unity of movement which enhances the horror of the occasion and the sickness which seizes the men as individuals; and the slightly quickened pace of the final lines marks the change in movement and in music. There is no single word or phrase which calls too much attention to itself, or which is not there for the sake of the total effect; so that when the climax comes . . . (the word *whimper* being exactly right) the atmosphere has been prepared for a complete suspension of disbelief" (6.214).

11. TSE took Davidson's "Thirty Bob a Week" (1894) from his *Ballads and Songs* (London: John Lane, 1895), 91-97. In "Reflections on Contemporary Poetry [II]" (1917), he referred to Davidson's poetry generally as that of "a violent Scotch preacher with an occasional passionate flash of exact vision" (1.598), but in later commentary in the *Saltire Review*, 4 (Summer 1957), he testified to the "terrific impact" that "Thirty Bob a Week" had on his youth, declaring that it "prepared me for initiation into the work of some of the French symbolists" and that it "has a very important place in the development of my own poetic technique" (57). He then wrote in his preface to *John Davidson: A Selection of his Poems* (London: Hutchinson, 1961): "Certainly, *Thirty Bob a Week* seems to me the only poem in which Davidson freed himself completely from the poetic diction of English verse of his time . . . But I am sure that I found inspiration in the content of the poem, and in the complete fitness of content and idiom: for I also had a good many dingy urban images to reveal. Davidson had a great theme, and also found an idiom which elicited the greatness of the theme, which endowed this thirty-bob-a-week clerk with a dignity that would not have appeared if a more conventional poetic diction had been employed. The personage that Davidson created in this poem has haunted me all my life, and the poem is to me a great poem for ever" (xi-xii).

12. Johnson's "Dead" (1887), dedicated "*To Olivier Georges Destrée*," as printed in *Poems* (London: Elkin Mathews, 1895), 60. TSE had lectured on Johnson as a religious poet and taught selections from his poetry in his Extension courses in 1917 (1.587, 581). In "Popular Theologians" (1927), he quoted a line from the first stanza of "Dead" in his review of John Middleton Murry's *The Life of Jesus*, stating that Murry "leads his train of disciples into the wilderness. / *The poor procession without music goes*" (3.67). Johnson was introduced to his dedicatee Olivier-Georges Destrée (1867-1919), Belgian art critic, translator, and editor of *La Jeune Belgique*, by Destrée's close friend Laurence Binyon at Selwyn Image's Fitzroy Street gatherings of writers and painters.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The 19-page broadcast script, originally donated to Eliot House, Harvard, is now in the Houghton: bMS Am 1691 (47). A 19-page folio typescript with pencil emendations not in TSE's hand was purchased by King's College in 1971 and is now in the Hayward Bequest (P41).

Mr. Eliot on Milton

To the Editor of *The Sunday Times*

The Sunday Times (16 Nov 1947) 6

Sir, – Mr. Desmond MacCarthy's interesting mention of my "Milton" lecture leads me to suspect that I failed in the task which I had set myself.[1] I had two purposes in mind. The first was to correct certain affirmations of my own and to give a wider context for the views which I continued to hold. I hoped that I had defined the limits of my change of mind, and that I had also made clear in what opinions I remained fixed. But, as Mr. MacCarthy tells your readers that "Mr. Eliot has now repented," I imagine that they will infer that I have made a recantation; and that, if any persons were ever disturbed by my views, they may now sleep peacefully in their beds.

This is a matter of small importance. But the failure of my second purpose is a more serious matter. It has seemed to me unfortunate that Milton criticism has for a long time been not very critical, and has relied too much upon contradictory assertions flung to and fro, not always without peevishness. Of attempts towards reciprocal understanding, and of attempts to reconcile different opinions when understood, we have not seen enough. It is usual for the "champions" of Milton (against whom I have sometimes wished to defend Milton) to introduce some reference to myself, followed by a passing smack at Mr. Pound, or Dr. Leavis, or both.[2] The thoroughgoing denunciation of Milton by Mr. Murry (based upon his reading of Keats) is less often mentioned; and the opinions of Samuel Johnson are commonly ignored.[3]

I have not read the book by Professor Bush, and I do not suppose that the sentences quoted by Mr. MacCarthy represent the best that Professor Bush has to offer. But the panoramic sneer of the second passage quoted by Mr. MacCarthy is fairly typical of what passes for criticism of criticism when the work of the author of *Paradise Lost* is under review.[4] One could wish that critics could abjure these overt or covert animosities, which, like acts of political aggression and reprisal, tend to perpetuate themselves. I am sorry that I have failed of my purpose to do something in the way of pacification.

T. S. ELIOT

Russell Square, W.C.1.

NOTES

1. "Milton and Mr. Eliot," the *Sunday Times*, 9 Nov 1947, 3. TSE wrote to MacCarthy on 14 Nov: "While I want to thank you for noticing my *Milton*, I have felt constrained to address a letter to the Editor of the *Sunday Times*, of which I enclose a copy. The point made in the first paragraph of the letter is one which would not have been worth making if it stood alone, and is only worth putting because of what I want to say in the second" (King's). He wrote to F. R. Leavis on the same day: "This kind of interpretation of my lecture is what I also feared. The position is a little delicate because I have always been on very friendly terms with Desmond MacCarthy and have even stayed at his house, but I do think that he has a certain literary aversion to my work of which he is probably not quite conscious."

2. MacCarthy quoted the following statement from Leavis's "Milton's Verse" (1933): "Milton's dislodgement, in the past decade, after his two centuries of predominance, was effected with remarkably little fuss. The irresistible argument was, or course, Mr. Eliot's creative achievement; it gave his few critical asides – potent, it is true, by context – their finality and made it unnecessary to elaborate a case."

3. See 7.24, 27-28

4. After Leavis's statement, MacCarthy quoted from *Paradise Lost in our Time: Some Comments* (1945) by the literary critic and Harvard professor Douglas Bush (1896-1983): "Apparently Mr. Eliot's critical asides, though potent, were not quite final, since the complete demolition of Milton required twenty-five pages from Mr. Leavis. However, the central fact was that the poetic world was not big enough to contain both Milton and Mr. Eliot and Milton had to go. Whatever the motives of Mr. Eliot's camp followers and others, his own sniping has been a kind of oblique – and quite needless – justification of his own poetry."

TSE said to MacCarthy in his letter of 14 Nov: "I was indeed distressed by reading the quotation from Professor Bush. . . . I had also in mind my knowledge that Leavis is a person who suffers from being very thin-skinned, and that such sneers as Professor Bush's always cause him pain."

To the Editor of *Horizon*[1]

Horizon, 16 (Dec 1947) 366

I do not get round to reading books so quickly as that.[2] Apart from books published by Faber & Faber (which for me are *hors de concours* for the present investigation)[3] the most interesting new books published in this country I have read in 1947 were published in 1946. They are: *The Apostolic Ministry*, K. E. Kirk and others, and *Christ, the Christian and the Church*, Mascall.[4]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE's reply to an inquiry sent out by the editor of *Horizon* "asking the recipients to tell us the names of the three books published in 1947 (if possible, not reprints) which they had read with the greatest interest and enjoyment" (365). Other respondents included John Hayward, Harold Nicolson, John Lehmann, George Orwell, Evelyn Waugh, Arthur Waley, Herbert Read, and William Plomer.

2. TSE evidently refers to the editor's statement of model length in his introductory paragraph: "Mr. Charles Morgan's *The Judge's Story* is exactly the right length for a three-hour air journey and becomes associated with the euphoria and anxiety of a sensitive traveller" (365).

3. *hors de concours*: outside the competition

4. *The Apostolic Ministry: Essays on the History and the Doctrine of Episcopacy* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946), prepared under the direction of K. E. (Kenneth Escott) Kirk (1886-1954), Bishop of Oxford, and printed in July 1946. E. L. Mascall, *Christ, the Christian and the Church: A Study of the Incarnation and its Consequences* (London; New York: Longmans, Green, 1946). E. L. (Eric Lionel) Mascall (1905-93), theologian and Anglo-Catholic priest, was professor of historical theology at King's College London. He invited TSE to give a talk on 21 Oct 1935 and wrote the preface to *The Church Looks Ahead* (1941), to which TSE contributed "Towards a Christian Britain" (6.162).

To the Editor of *Scrutiny*

Scrutiny, 15 (Dec 1947) 56

Sir, – In your issue of September last, which I have just received, Mr. Ronald Bottrall replies to Mr. Mason, who had made what to Mr. Bottrall (and I must say, to me also) seemed "a very odd remark" to the effect that Mr. Bottrall should have appended, to a poem called *Freedom Lies in Adaptation*, a note stating either that the author had, or that he had not, read *Little Gidding*. Mr. Bottrall says: "The lines were, in fact, drafted in the Autumn of 1941 and finished in their final form in June/July 1942."[1]

I should like to mention that *Little Gidding* was written in the latter part of 1942.[2] It first appeared in *The New English Weekly* in October, 1942, and I had not shown the poem or any part of it to Mr. Bottrall before publication. Mr. Bottrall in June/July, 1942, was certainly unacquainted with any verse of mine later than *The Dry Salvages*. And I do not believe that he could have seen *The New English Weekly* in October of that year.[3] In all probability he had no acquaintance with the poem until it was published separately by Faber & Faber. Perhaps I should, however, add a note to *Little Gidding* to say whether I had or had not read a draft of *Freedom Lies in Adaptation* before composing my poem.[4]

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In his review of *Selected Poems* (1946) by Ronald Bottrall (1906-89) in the spring 1947 issue, the critic Harold A. Mason (1911-93) quoted from *Freedom Lies in Adaptation*, which had appeared in *Scrutiny* in the summer of 1942, and commented: "If these lines were composed before Mr. Bottrall had read *Little Gidding*, he should in self-defence have mentioned the fact. If not, it would be interesting to know *how long* he had known *Little Gidding* when he wrote them" (221). Bottrall retorted in the Sept issue: "The reason why I did not state (where? in a footnote?) that I had not read *Little Gidding* when I wrote *Freedom Lies in Acceptance* is that, until I saw Mr. Mason's review it had never struck me that there was any resemblance between the two poems" (294).

2. The first draft of *Little Gidding* was in fact completed in July 1941. TSE then abandoned the poem in Oct and did not resume working on it again until July 1942. He had shown drafts to John Hayward and Geoffrey Faber before the poem was published.

3. As British Council representative, Bottrall was at that time in Sweden, "where books came slowly and late" (294). As representative of the same organization in Rome, Bottrall would soon be the host of TSE's British Council tour of Italy from 8 to 16 Dec 1947.

4. Bottrall had written in his letter: "It would be very trying, anyhow, if a poet had always to list at the bottom of each of his poems works he had *not* read, particularly if, as in this case, the other work had not, at the time of writing, been published" (294).

La poesia nel teatro[1]

La fiera letteraria, 2 (25 Dec 1947) 5-6

Chiunque si ponga, ai nostri giorni, a difendere il dramma in versi, deve convenire che, quanto al pubblico, esso si divide in due parti. Ci son quelli che sono convinti che i drammi in versi appartengono al passato e che un dramma moderno può essere soltanto scritto in prosa, e ci sono quegli altri così persuasi dell'importanza di quello in versi fino a tentarne l'estrema difesa, il che implica che, quanto al dramma in prosa, invece, esso non ha nulla da dire. Questi ultimi, gli amatori della poesia, sono in minoranza, e nondimeno sono ostinati quanto gli altri della maggioranza; e secondo me, hanno torto entrambi. Per conto mio, credo che il dramma in versi, un dramma che sia insieme opera di teatro e opera di poesia, è ancora una forma d'arte della quale noi abbiamo estrema necessità; così come credo che esso debba essere difeso con intelligenza e ragionevolezza, qualora voglia guadagnar l'attenzione del pubblico.

Le mie osservazioni saranno fondate solo sulla mia esperienza del teatro inglese, del pubblico inglese e della lingua inglese, perché tali sono i termini della mia conoscenza; e nondimeno credo che il problema del dramma in versi è, o dovrebbe essere, della medesima importanza per qualsiasi lingua e qualsiasi letteratura. Esso ha tuttavia una importanza particolare per l'Inghilterra, poiché il nostro più grande scrittore e poeta è anche il nostro maggior drammaturgo, e fu sulla scena che le sue maggiori virtù di poeta furono realizzate. Qualsiasi ragione io possa avanzare per far sperare che la poesia fiorirà nuovamente nel teatro inglese, servirà insieme a far sperare che essa fiorisca nuovamente, e allo stesso modo, su altre scene e in altre lingue. E nondimeno credo che in Inghilterra, da trecento anni, stiamo rimpiangendo la scomparsa della grande poesia dalla scena, poiché siamo coscienti della supremazia di Shakespeare così nella nostra poesia come nel nostro teatro. Molti tentativi sono stati fatti per riunire assieme la poesia e il teatro e non è senza interesse considerare le ragioni per le quali essi sono falliti finora. Solo negli ultimi anni – negli ultimi quindici o quasi – è risorto l'interesse per il teatro come mezzo o strumento di poesia, il quale, seppure risulti finora imperfetto, è secondo me, di gran lunga più promettente che non qualsiasi altro dimostrato nei due secoli precedenti. E potremmo

comprender meglio quale poesia si debba fare a teatro se prendiamo a considerare le ragioni per le quali essa è mancata in tante mai occasioni. Consideriamo prima la questione dal punto di vista del pubblico e le difficoltà che esso incontra in un dramma in versi e, in un secondo momento, dal punto di vista del poeta e delle sue difficoltà *con sé stesso*.

IL TEATRO IN INGHILTERRA FINO A IBSEN

Non credo che le divergenze tra il dramma in versi e quello in prosa siano divenute profonde, in Inghilterra, fino agli ultimi anni dello scorso secolo. È un fatto che qualsivoglia opera di teatro, fosse in versi o in prosa, ebbe, fino a quel momento, scarsa importanza. La traduzione dei drammi di Ibsen credo, fece molto più che qualsiasi altra opera, per conferire rispettabilità al teatro, e dargli insieme un *peso d'intelligenza*: anche se si può aggiungere che talune *pièces à thèse* francesi, abilmente costruite e paludate d'una effimera fondatezza e serietà, avessero pur qualcosa a che fare con quella. Seguirono i drammi di Bernard Shaw che, essendo scritti in una prosa letterariamente meritevole, e facendosi portavoce di punti di vista di sicuro richiamo sugli spiriti più indipendenti e ribelli del loro tempo, resero popolare il dramma in prosa come veicolo di *idee*. La situazione, senza dubbio, così come i nostri contemporanei ebbero a sentirla, fece in modo che coloro tra i frequentatori più serii dei teatri, particolarmente interessati ai valori drammatici, pensassero che per la poesia non c'era luogo sulla scena; nel mentre che coloro i quali avevano un interesse particolare alla poesia non frequentavano i teatri: ovvero, seppure lo facevano, vi andavano a soddisfare appetiti affatto diversi. Gli amatori della poesia affermano che i maggiori drammi del passato – non solo quelli greci ma anche i massimi capolavori letterarii di numerosi paesi moderni – sono stati scritti in versi; ed il fatto che i drammi moderni sanno essere scritti soltanto in prosa (e in ciò sono d'accordo cogli amatori di teatro) serve solo a far credere loro che noi possediamo meno genio che non i nostri maggiori.

DRAMMA IN PROSA E IN VERSI

È ovvio che noi non si debba competere col teatro di più facile popolarità ma solo con i serii drammi in prosa e la pretesa che i drammi in prosa di soggetto serio sono in un certo senso più serii che non i drammi in versi non è senza fondamento. I drammi in prosa di soggetto serio sono, infatti, degli strumenti per la propagazione di quelle che si chiamano *idee*, trattano, usualmente, di vita contemporanea e sempre, sia esplicitamente che

implicitamente, d'un *problema* contemporaneo e, di regola, tendono a suggerire per quel determinato problema una determinata soluzione. Naturalmente tali problemi, dal punto di vista e sul piano in cui vengono trattati dal drammaturgo, non possono essere avvicinati ed espressi altro che in prosa. Né è soltanto perché, per parecchie generazioni, noi siamo stati ossessionati dall'ideale del *realismo*, ed abbiamo desiderato di vedere agire sulla scena solo gente come noi, usa a parlare esattamente come noi parliamo, ovvero come noi vorremmo parlare. Qualsiasi sia la nostra opinione attorno al dramma in prosa del nostro tempo, si deve ammettere che esistono soggetti di particolare serietà che possono esprimersi in prosa ma non in versi; e che una grandissima parte, non solo del contenuto di pensiero ma anche soltanto di quello emotivo dei drammi moderni, è tale da poter essere affidata soltanto alla prosa. I sostenitori del dramma in prosa possono rafforzare il loro punto additando la fiacchezza e le limitazioni dei drammi in versi scritti nello stesso periodo di tempo. Quanto al semplice interesse suscitato da essi, infatti, esso è stato assai più limitato e, quanto ai personaggi che essi rappresentavano, all'intreccio e alla tecnica teatrale in genere, furono certamente meno riusciti che non quelli in prosa. Il dramma in versi del nostro tempo è stato più spesso una escursione del poeta nel teatro che non quella di un drammaturgo nella poesia: e quando noi andiamo a teatro, siamo disposti a perdonare più volentieri dei cattivi versi che non una difettosa costruzione drammatica. Una sola eccezione mi viene in mente: sulle scene inglesi, quale era nel repertorio dell'Old Vic, il *Peer Gynt* di Ibsen è sempre stato un costante e sicuro successo anche presso un pubblico più facile e misto di quello che è uso andare a sentire i drammi in prosa dello stesso autore.[2] Ciò prova due cose: in primo luogo che un buon dramma in versi può divenire più popolare, ed è probabile che sia accolto da maggior successo che non un qualsiasi dramma in prosa; ed in secondo luogo che, anche in un dramma in versi, quel che conta di più è la sua struttura teatrale – poiché bisogna riconoscere che la traduzione inglese del *Peer Gynt* è in versi ben poveri. In genere si può dire che quando la gente va a teatro per sentire un dramma scritto da un poeta si mette nello stato d'animo di chi compie un'azione meritevole e insieme di chi s'aspetti anche d'annoiarsi un po'.

POPOLARITÀ DI SHAKESPEARE

I sostenitori del dramma poetico, contrariamente a quel che avviene per i sostenitori dei drammi seri in prosa, si muovono su un terreno più sicuro quando puntano sul passato. Il fatto che Shakespeare è ancora, com'è sempre

stato, il più popolare tra i drammaturghi inglesi, sta a dimostrare che nella poesia per sé stessa, almeno, non può consistere nessun serio impedimento. Siamo nel vero, infatti, allorché asseriamo che, udendo sulla scena della grande poesia espressa in tal modo che sia anche propria a un determinato personaggio che parli ed esemplifichi una determinata situazione, noi passiamo per una esperienza di emozioni assai più ricca che se ascoltassimo soltanto la semplice prosa che quello stesso personaggio avrebbe adoperata nella vita. E, analizzando tale esperienza, dobbiamo forse riconoscere che essa è più ricca solo perché è doppia, e consiste, cioè, nel piacere di una grande azione drammatica e di una grande poesia provati nello stesso tempo? ovvero essa non è che una esperienza affatto diversa la quale ci fa comunicare con un diverso mondo di sentimenti? Talvolta, per la verità, accade che in qualche famoso dramma in versi noi dimentichiamo nel piacere per le parole in cui s'esprime l'azione drammatica che rappresenta; ma spesso noi dimentichiamo proprio le parole, cessiamo d'essere coscienti del mezzo espressivo del nostro totale assorbimento nell'azione. Se la poesia e il teatro fossero soltanto tra loro combinati in modo che noi potessimo provare il piacere di due arti nello stesso momento, allora potremmo anche accorgerci che un cattivo dramma può essere un grande poema e che, d'altro canto, *Amleto* resterebbe lo stesso grandissimo dramma anche se fosse scritto in prosa.

La debolezza dei drammi in versi inglesi scritti dopo la grande stagione del teatro poetico che tramontò circa trecento anni fa consiste proprio in questo, che cioè i drammi vennero scritti da poeti che non erano poeti drammatici. Dico *poeti drammatici* e non *drammaturghi*: la distinzione, a questo punto, è importante. La ragione che si dà solitamente per giustificare il fallimento di quei drammi consiste nel dire che quelle erano opere di poeti che il più delle volte non avevano disposizioni naturali per il teatro e a cui mancò l'occasione di apprendere dalla viva e giornaliera pratica del teatro, dalla quale i poeti elisabettiani impararono le fondamentali arti della scena. E credo che vi siano cause anche più riposte: e cioè nella stessa tecnica del verso. Studiando i drammi di tre grandi poeti del secolo scorso, Tennyson, Browning, e Swinburne – e i due primi, per lo meno, aspirarono a veder realizzati sulla scena i loro drammi nella stessa misura con cui tenevano a che fossero letti – conclusi che la maggior ragione per cui essi non hanno l'aspetto di drammi veri e proprii, e appartengono, insieme, a quella parte dell'opera dei loro autori che noi leggiamo con meno diletto e interesse, è che questi vi usarono un tipo di verso, a mio parere, sbagliato. Non voglio dire con questo che

esistesse un qualsiasi tipo di verso che fosse, invece, appropriato in sé e per sé, né che essi si trovarono in una posizione favorevole a trovarlo, e non sono nemmeno sicuro che noi, al giorno d'oggi, sappiamo quale esso sia e siamo capaci di usarlo, anche se sono persuaso che ci troviamo in una posizione migliore della loro. Ma il *blank verse*, il pentametro giambico sciolto che essi adoperarono, sebbene la differenza apparente fra esso e quello dello Shakespeare e dei suoi contemporanei consista nell'essere quel primo più regolare, è proprio il *blank verse* della poesia non drammatica. Quei poeti credevano che un dramma dovesse essere scritto in quel determinato verso del quale essi già si erano rivelati maestri, il verso che essi avevano reso perfetto nelle loro poesie. Di conseguenza, quando i loro personaggi parlano sulla scena, non danno alcuna illusione che la loro sia una conversazione reale. Noi assistiamo, in sostanza, soltanto a un determinato numero di attori che stanno recitando dei versi mentre rivestono le spoglie di tali personaggi quali nessun attore sarebbe mai capace di rendere vivi.

DIFFICOLTÀ TECNICHE

La difficoltà è quindi soprattutto tecnica e riguarda il *verso* più che il *dramma*. Ed è una difficoltà che, secondo me, deve presentarsi a qualsiasi poeta di qualsiasi lingua che abbia una ricca eredità di poesia di parecchi secoli, allorché voglia far rivivere qualche forma di poesia che sia già stata illustrata da un grande maestro del passato. Noi non dobbiamo imitare il passato; e d'altro canto non dobbiamo ripudiarlo. La maggior parte della cattiva poesia appartiene a queste due categorie: quella che tenta di fare ciò che è già stato fatto, e perfettamente, una volta, e quello che si studia di fare qualcosa completamente diverso da quel che è già stato fatto. La poesia deve nascere dalla poesia che già esiste nella stessa lingua e, insieme, dev'essere *nuova* e, quindi, non c'è una formula per il successo. Nello studiare un tipo di versificazione adatto al teatro contemporaneo, mi sono trovato io stesso incerto tra due vie: sussiste dapprima la tentazione di scrivere una poesia che non sia drammatica e nella propria mente lavorano innumerevoli echi della maggiore poesia non drammatica scritta nella propria lingua, e in un secondo tempo urge la tentazione di imitare i metri di Shakespeare e dei suoi contemporanei.

Un dramma in versi, come ogni altra opera di poesia, deve parlare con la voce del suo proprio tempo. Non è necessario, più di quanto non lo sia stato per il passato, che il soggetto del dramma sia moderno: ma ogni scrittore deve parlare ai suoi contemporanei il linguaggio del suo tempo. C'è innanzi tutto una questione di metri: occorre mantenere l'orecchio intonato alla

musica contemporanea, poiché, sia il vostro eroe Agamennone, sia, invece, un moderno generale, egli dovrà pur sempre parlare, per essere compreso, la lingua del drammaturgo e del suo pubblico. È solo in un secondo tempo che sorge il problema del vocabolario. Ai giorni nostri, in Inghilterra, il problema consiste nel trovare quel che possa essere, una volta per tutte, il tipo di verso che evita l'associazione o la imitazione del pentametro giambico il quale comporta necessariamente sempre l'eco di uno o un altro periodo nella passata tradizione della poesia inglese. Io credo che qualsiasi lingua fino a quando rimanga la medesima e non soffra mutamenti, ha taluni limiti alla varietà dei metri; e il pentametro giambico è, con tutta probabilità, la *norma* per il verso inglese per tutto un lungo tempo avvenire. Ma, insieme, il verso d'un drammaturgo contemporaneo dev'essere a sufficienza diverso dal *blank verse* tradizionale in modo da evitare una troppo insistente reminiscenza del passato. Poiché se i personaggi parlano in una lingua che appartiene al passato, essi ci rammenteranno piuttosto i personaggi del passato anziché dei reali essere umani.

NON ESISTONO DRAMMI POETICI SCRITTI IN PROSA

Sono stati fatti dei tentativi per sfuggire a queste difficoltà senza peraltro che potessero scoprirsi nuovi metri. Non esistono drammi «poetici» scritti in prosa. Il tentativo di Maeterlinck per trovare qualcosa che sostituisca la poesia sulla scena mediante la evasione in un mondo artificiale di simboli non ci sembra sia stato fruttuoso: la perdita e la compromissione del senso della realtà ci sembra troppo grande. Un dramma di questo tipo è, secondo me, incapace di elevare la *vera* vita fino alla poesia. Il tentativo del drammaturgo irlandese J. M. Synge di scrivere drammi «poetici» adoperando il linguaggio naturalmente poetico dei rozzi contadini irlandesi, ha anch'esso serii limiti. L'uso del linguaggio di gente il cui linguaggio è naturalmente poetico significa limitarsi fatalmente al mondo angusto di quella gente. Non si potrà comporre a questo modo un dramma che possa esser gustato dai pubblici raffinati d'Europa: i personaggi saranno troppo remoti dalla vita che noi viviamo.[3] I numerosi esperimenti di William Butler Yeats presentano, per noi, il massimo interesse. I suoi drammi in versi si possono suddividere in tre periodi: nel primo egli adoperò un regolare *blank verse* d'egregia fattura il quale, dove raggiungeva la poesia, era di insufficiente efficacia drammatica; nel secondo, il periodo dei brevi drammi lirici, egli s'industriò di girare la difficoltà mediante un dialogo in prosa intramezzato da interludi lirici in verso. Solo nell'ultimo periodo, con un dramma intitolato «Resurrezione» e,

infine, con un altro intitolato «Purgatorio» fece reali progressi verso la poesia drammatica. L'ultimo di questi drammi, a mio avviso, rappresenta la più significativa evoluzione nella tecnica del verso tentata finora. I successori avranno molto da imparare dall'intenso lavoro compiuto durante tutta la vita da questo poeta nell'esperimentare le forme del dramma poetico.[4]

FIDUCIA NEL DRAMMA POETICO

Se io ho fiducia che un nuovo dramma poetico è almeno *possibile*, ciò dipende, tuttavia, dai generali mutamenti avvenuti nella lingua inglese quanto a ricerche metriche in quest'ultimo secolo. In tale processo di esperimenti c'è, inevitabilmente, una gran parte di scarto; e i versificatori, ribellandosi affatto alla metrica ottocentesca, sono riusciti troppo spesso ad arrivare soltanto alla assenza addirittura della metrica. E nondimeno il benefico risultato di simili mutamenti è consistito nel modificare la tecnica del verso nell'intento di adattarla al ritmo di un reale *linguaggio* colto del nostro tempo; e, ciò facendo, nel facilitare, insieme, il compito del poeta drammatico. Siamo ora abbastanza emancipati dalla moda dei versi di tipo ottocentesco per essere in grado di scrivere nei toni e nella chiave d'una moderna conversazione, e quindi di studiare *quale contratta forma di verso* – e quale tipo di verso – possiamo imporre al linguaggio contemporaneo. Mentre, una generazione fa, gli scrittori di drammi in versi erravano nel tentativo di confinare il loro dialogo in una forma che rendeva impossibili un linguaggio e un discorso naturale, il difetto più comune nei poeti drammatici contemporanei consiste piuttosto nel loro lasciarsi andare troppo liberamente e nell'assimilare il loro dialogo di tanto al linguaggio comune che con quel mezzo viene impedito di comunicare qualsiasi effetto musicale senza del quale il dramma poetico nega sé stesso.

La difficoltà di trovare il tipo di verso proprio al linguaggio contemporaneo – e occorre rammentare che il dramma veramente grande di qualsiasi età e lingua è sempre stato contemporaneo nella lingua – sebbene sia l'ostacolo fondamentale, non è tuttavia in nessun modo il *solo* che si debba scavalcare. È ovvio, intanto, che il tipo medio d'una struttura drammatica, la esigenza di determinati espedienti teatrali e, in breve, tutti gli altri ritrovati intesi a fermare l'attenzione d'una platea e a tenerla avvinta e interessata sino alla fine, non sono meno essenziali e urgenti per il dramma in versi che non per un qualsiasi altro tipo di dramma. Il poeta drammatico dei nostri giorni comincia anzitutto coll'essere un poeta: egli è essenzialmente un poeta che sconfina nel teatro e non un drammaturgo che si studia

di dettar poesia. Se egli vuol riuscire a teatro, deve sottoporsi a un tirocinio in teatro. Un poeta di genio può sopravvivere anche al colmo della solitudine e dell'oblìo: egli abbisogna, al massimo, d'un editore che voglia conservare le sue poesie in un libro stampato. Con pochi amici che abbiano in stima e che siano capaci di fornirgli quei suggerimenti e quelle critiche di cui abbisogna la sua poesia e un editore disposto a spendere un po' di danaro per stampare le sue opere, egli può anche attendere qualche tempo. Ma un poeta che intenda scrivere dei drammi ha bisogno d'un regista, e quasi d'un regista che sia egli stesso un uomo di genio: poiché deve capire, anzitutto, che cos'è che il poeta vuol significare, fiutare le possibilità e gli spunti pur attraverso le imperfezioni e i difetti, e perfino collaborare egli stesso nel disegno del dramma. Anche allora, ci sono molte cose che un aspirante drammaturgo può comprendere soltanto dall'esperienza: dal vedere il suo dramma rappresentato, dall'imparare a guardarlo con gli occhi degli attori allo stesso modo che con quelli del pubblico; e a trarre ammaestramento, attraverso un graduale apprezzamento dei difetti di un dramma, in modo che il prossimo gli riesca meglio. Ognuno dei suoi drammi, quindi, perché il drammaturgo possa efficacemente imparare, occorre che venga rappresentato; e la rappresentazione – in specie quando il dramma non consegua un buon successo – costa del danaro. E quindi occorrono dei finanziamenti e dei finanziatori; e occorre anche un pubblico che abbia particolare interesse a questo tipo di teatro, tale da tollerare le imperfezioni, conoscere e apprezzare le difficoltà del drammaturgo, ma insieme acutamente critico. Gli inizii d'un poeta drammatico debbono quindi aver luogo in piccoli teatri e in un ambito limitato di spese; ciò dipende dall'esservi a disposizione un regista e un certo numero di attori – i quali, come gli stessi drammaturghi, dovranno *studiare* un nuovo tipo di *recitazione* poiché si renderà necessario a loro uno *stile* affatto diverso da quello proprio ai drammi ordinarii, così come una dizione assai più finita – e regista e attori debbono essere uomini e donne volonterosi e capaci di dedicarsi a quel genere di lavoro in cambio di salari molto bassi. Ed accanto a una appropriata combinazione tra autore, regista e attori, si deve cominciare col contare, come ho già detto, su un pubblico iniziato e limitato.

Anche se queste condizioni saranno soddisfatte – e noi potremmo pure fornire esempii di buoni risultati ottenuti in questo campo, a Londra, sia prima che dopo la guerra – può sempre darsi il caso che il dramma poetico si debba arrestare proprio a questo punto: c'è in sostanza il pericolo di far credere al pubblico più vasto che il dramma in versi sia un tipo particolare

di dramma indirizzato solo a una cerchia ristretta di pubblico appassionato di poesia, il quale abbia più interesse alla poesia che non al teatro, e cioè un tipo di dramma che sa sopravvivere solo se preservato con meticolosa cura in tutta la sua purezza dalle influenze di commercialismi e professionalismi, un piccolo mondo, insomma, di speciali autori, speciali registi e attori, e speciali teatrini. Che sia qualcosa, in sostanza, fatto per artisti che non sanno aver successo in un teatro comune, per un pubblico che non frequenta il teatro comune. Com'è naturale, il trattamento iniziale d'una qualsivoglia pianta rara e delicata dev'essere fatto con una particolare cautela e attenzione: essa deve germinare in un terreno appositamente preparato e dev'essere incoraggiata nella sua crescita nel tepore di una serra. Ma il principale scopo di allevare a questo modo il dramma poetico dev'essere quello di procurargli una crescita sicura, che lo renda capace di difendersi dai venti più aspri e dai più improvvisi sbalzi di clima. Il dramma in versi non adempirà al proprio ruolo nella rinascita e nel mantenimento della nostra civiltà letteraria, fino a quando non saprà tenere interessato un pubblico quale, in Inghilterra, sa attrarre e tenere interessato soltanto Shakespeare. Il dramma poetico deve riuscire a dilettare un pubblico che non sappia distinguere e non si preoccupi se per avventura stia ascoltando della poesia o meno: un pubblico, insomma, cosciente soltanto di stare assistendo a un dramma avvincente e che sia inconsciamente soggiogato dalla poesia.

UN COMPLIMENTO INDIRETTO

A rischio di mortificare la mia vanità, voglio riferire quel che mi è sempre sembrato il maggior complimento – proprio perché inintenzionale – che io abbia mai ricevuto per il mio *Assassinio nella cattedrale*. Due del pubblico furono da me sorpresi nel *foyer* mentre discutevano il dramma dopo la rappresentazione: uno chiedeva all'altro se avesse mai letto qualcuna delle mie poesie. «Poesie?» rispose l'altro affatto meravigliato, «non sapevo davvero che scrivesse poesie».

Mi sono intrattenuto con tanta insistenza sulle difficoltà di far rinascere e quindi ristabilire la poesia sul teatro, che sarebbe pur giustificato da parte di ognuno degli spettatori muovermi ora questa domanda: «E allora, qual è, in sostanza, la necessità della poesia nel teatro? perché affrontare tutte queste difficoltà, quando si sa già di un probabile insuccesso, dal momento che il dramma in prosa è capace di darci tutto ciò che si può richiedere allo spettacolo teatrale? Ad onta di tutto quel che dite, non si potrebbe più

semplicemente pensare che il dramma poetico è un anacronismo e che la prosa sia il mezzo di espressione più adatto alla scena moderna?».

Ho già detto e sostenuto che un dramma in versi è una cosa totalmente diversa da un dramma in prosa che venga riscritto in versi. La *poesia* in un dramma in versi è d'una specie affatto diversa dalla poesia non-drammatica; ed allo stesso modo l'efficacia d'un dramma in versi è diversa da quella di un dramma in prosa: possiede le sue leggi particolari di struttura, pur se fra queste ve ne siano parecchie che valgono anche per il dramma in prosa. Ora sarebbe impossibile spiegare la differenza tra un dramma in prosa e uno in versi a chi non è capace di apprezzare la differenza da sé stesso, e che non sappia distinguere da sé che il particolare tipo di piacere ch'egli ricava dall'uno è diverso dal piacere che ricava, invece, dall'altro. Non si potrà rispondere alla domanda: «Qual è il merito della poesia?» se essa è mossa da persona sprovveduta di sensibilità poetica. Eppure io credo che moltissima gente, fortunatamente, coglie un differente piacere dall'ascolto d'un dramma in versi e d'un dramma in prosa; ed a costoro è forse possibile esprimere ed esemplificare la differenza. In primo luogo si deve ammettere che ci sono alcune cose che un dramma in prosa può e sa risolvere meglio che non un dramma in versi. Sarebbe impossibile sostenere il principio che il concetto di grande dramma sia inseparabile da quello di poesia e che tutti i drammi in prosa non sono che il frutto di un ingegno inferiore volto a soddisfare un gusto inferiore. Per esprimere taluni piani della realtà, se così posso dire, alcuni aspetti del vivere sociale, la prosa è il mezzo di gran lunga più adatto: è il più appropriato per la commedia sociale nella quale noi siamo tenuti a riconoscere e ad essere dilettati proprio dal contemplarci nel nostro comportamento esterno. Nel passato la commedia ha sempre teso, nel suo sviluppo, a trasformare il verso in prosa: mi sembra assai probabile che se il dramma greco avesse continuato a trasformarsi e a svilupparsi per qualche generazione, in luogo di arrestarsi a un determinato punto, la commedia greca avrebbe finito coll'essere scritta in prosa. Ma non sono soltanto alcuni tipi di commedie che sono più adatti alla prosa, ma anche alcuni altri tipi di dramma e in particolare quel che si conviene chiamare col nome di dramma ideologico, specialmente quando il drammaturgo possiede una particolare opinione attorno alla verità della quale egli intende persuadere il suo pubblico, in luogo di una particolare emozione che desideri comunicargli. Noi possiamo quindi ignorare il problema se il dramma in versi sia *superiore* al dramma in prosa e fissare, invece, la nostra attenzione sull'altro che si pone la domanda: «In che cosa differiscono essi?».

STRUTTURA MUSICALE DEL TEATRO IN VERSI

Dirò, tanto per cominciare, che il dramma in versi rinunzia ad alcuni argomenti che possono essere espressi dal dramma in prosa per volgersi alla ricerca espressiva di argomenti che possono invece esser significati dalla musica; e che un dramma in versi di salda fattura possiede una struttura musicale così come ne possiede una drammatica, ovvero sarebbe meglio specificare che la medesima struttura o disegno è capace di effetti tanto drammatici quanto musicali. Per dirla in altre parole, aggiungerò che il dramma in versi e quello in prosa hanno ognuno, come obiettivo principale, il loro piano di realtà così come hanno il loro proprio argomento e campo, e che essi possono oltrepassarsi a vicenda i confini e ognuno compiere, in qualche misura, il lavoro proprio dell'altro. Ma il dramma in prosa non può mantenersi troppo distante dal piano del nostro ordinario vivere sociale: esso può mostrarci questo nostro mondo da un determinato punto di vista, e così rendere più penetrante la nostra percezione, può accrescere la nostra capacità di conoscenza, mostrarci aspetti ignoti di questo mondo, dei rapporti fra persona e persona e degli effetti degli uni sugli altri, e arricchire insomma la nostra gente più che non lo spettacolo ordinario della vita. I personaggi sono individui separati e distinti che partecipano allo stesso genere di esistenza del quale noi siamo per solito coscienti. Ma oltre il filo delle emozioni classificabili e definibili della vita di ogni giorno esiste una sorta di appendice di estensione indefinita e di sentimenti che noi siamo capaci di osservare, per così dire, oltre la coda dell'occhio, ovvero in momenti di distrazione: questa appendice può essere rappresentata in una azione drammatica solo attraverso la poesia. Nel dramma in versi, come in quello in prosa, non è permesso ad alcun personaggio di esprimersi in modo contrario al suo carattere; ma in un dramma in versi egli si può esprimere anche *al di là* del carattere e quindi introdurci in un mondo di sentimenti dei quali noi siamo, di solito, inconscii. Un dramma in versi, in sostanza, può esprimere mediante le parole determinati sentimenti che sarebbe altrimenti impossibile comunicare se non con la musica.

ANALISI DELLA PRIMA SCENA DELL'*AMLETO*

Penso che il miglior modo di render chiaro il mio pensiero sia quello di analizzare un esempio di costruzione poetica, tolto da una scena di un grande e famoso dramma, d'un dramma che, sia nell'originale che in traduzione, tutti conoscono. Tale scena costituisce un buon esempio e perché è la prima scena del dramma, e quindi cade innanzi tutti i momenti di maggiore

intensità poetica, e perché non è una di quelle scene nelle quali ci si debba aspettare che l'elemento poetico sia il più significativo e perché essa è, dal punto di vista dell'abilità teatrale, un efficacissimo inizio del momento che intona perfettamente il dramma dandone quasi la chiave e incatenando subito l'attenzione del pubblico sull'argomento centrale di esso; e, da ultimo, perché si tratta della prima scena di *Amleto*.

Ciò che si fa notare dopo un'attenta *lettura* di questa scena è la sorprendente capacità di variare lo stile in una situazione in cui nulla è superfluo. Tale varietà opera su noi nel mentre assistiamo al dramma: ma noi non ne siamo coscienti. I primi ventidue versi sono composti con le più semplici parole e col più casalingo linguaggio. Per giungere al punto di saper dettare quei ventidue versi, Shakespeare dovette spendere parecchi anni di lavoro per il teatro; non troviamo nulla di tanto semplice e insieme di solido in tutte le sue opere precedenti. Occorsero a Shakespeare anni di fatica per sviluppare il verso diremo così *colloquiale* oltre il monologo del personaggio (dove la semplicità e modestia del linguaggio è qualcosa di ciò che noi tendiamo a conoscere) in un vivo dialogo drammatico. Nessun poeta ha mai composto versi drammatici, il quale, prima, non abbia saputo scrivere versi che siano, come questi, *trasparenti*: voglio dire che voi siete portati ad ascoltare in loro non la poesia, ma il significato. Quando udite i primi versi di *Amleto*, non sapete distinguere se i personaggi parlano in verso o in prosa; quel che distinguete d'un subito è, invece, la fredda notte, gli uomini di guardia. Il verso opera su noi con un effetto differente da quello che sortirebbe la prosa; ma ciò di cui ci rendiamo conto sono gli ufficiali della guardia sui terrapieni di Elsinore e la previsione di un qualche spettacolo terrificante di là da venire. Ci sono, senza dubbio, taluni momenti nei quali il poeta drammatico richiamerà l'attenzione alla sola poesia – e c'è un momento di questi, proprio in questa scena, ma il grande poeta drammatico è colui il quale può farci dimenticare, al momento opportuno, che esista una qualche differenza tra la poesia e la prosa.

Dal brusco scatto dell'inizio, appropriato ai personaggi degli uomini della guardia, e che tuttavia non bada a esprimere un particolare carattere oltre ciò che è richiesto dalla situazione immediata, il verso trapassa dolcemente, in un «tempo» più lento, dopo l'apparizione sulla scena dei due nobili di corte, Orazio e Marcello:

> Orazio dice che non è se non la nostra fantasia . . .[5]

e questo «tempo» s'intensifica ancora di più all'apparizione del fantasma reale, al solenne e sonoro:

Chi sei tu che usurpi questa parte della notte . . .[6]

Con quel suggerire una nota di maestosità nel verbo *usurpare* e nell'allusione che abilmente ci richiama alla persona *della quale* egli è il fantasma:

Così corrugò le ciglia egli una volta allorché in un iroso colloquio
Abbatté sul ghiaccio i Polacchi nelle loro slitte.[7]

C'è un subito mutamento di ritmo nelle parole di Orazio al fantasma, alla sua seconda apparizione; questo «tempo» staccato è interrotto da

Noi gli facciamo torto, essendo egli così maestoso,
A far mostra di opporgli violenza . . .[8]

e la scena è risolta da una serie di versi che noi *udiamo come poesia*. Marcello dice:

Esso è svanito sul cantar del gallo,
Dicono alcuni che ogni qualvolta s'approssima la stagione
In cui si celebra la nascita del nostro Salvatore,
L'uccello dell'alba canta tutta la notte . . .[9]

ed Orazio risponde:

Così ho udito e in parte lo credo.
Ma guarda, il mattino, vestito d'un manto rossigno
Cammina sulla rugiada di quell'alto colle volto ad oriente;
Poniamo termine alla nostra guardia.[10]

Ora io credo che in tutta questa scena esista un disegno musicale che dirige e rafforza i nostri sentimenti, allorché noi assistiamo al dramma, senza che noi ce ne avvediamo. Ho osservato che negli ultimi versi di Marcello ed Orazio c'è un deliberato emergere del poetico dal contingente. Quando udiamo questi versi

Ma guarda, il mattino, vestito d'un manto rossigno,
Cammina sulla rugiada di quell'alto colle volto ad oriente;

noi veniamo sollevati, per un istante, al di sopra del personaggio, ma senza per questo provare alcun senso di improprietà per il fatto che è Orazio a parlare. Il mutamento di tono e di linguaggio, in questa scena, obbedisce a una logica musicale così come a una logica drammatica. Ed osserviamo inoltre che i due versi di Orazio che io ho già citati due volte, sono preceduti da un verso del più semplice linguaggio che potrebbe essere insieme verso e prosa:

Così ho udito e in parte lo credo

e sono seguiti, subito, da una breve battuta che è appena più d'una *stage direction*, d'una didascalìa:

Poniamo termine alla nostra guardia.

IL DOPPIO DISEGNO DRAMMATICO E MUSICALE

Sarebbe interessante esaminare il problema di quel che potremmo chiamare il «doppio disegno» – drammatico e musicale – di un grande dramma poetico. Penso che un esame degli ultimi drammi di Shakespeare mostrerebbe uno sviluppo sempre crescente nella completezza e nella complessità del disegno musicale di essi intesi come insieme: ho scelto una sola scena da un solo dramma per brevità e chiarezza. Anche nell'*Amleto*, in un dramma, cioè, che presenta una gran quantità di quel che si suole ritenere per difettosa e irregolare costruzione, non so trovar nulla che possa essere omesso come superfluo o irrilevante. Quando vidi per la prima volta il dramma rappresentato integralmente – poiché la maggior parte delle edizioni teatrali di *Amleto* sogliono omettere parecchie scene – mi sono accorto che le parti solitamente omesse erano indispensabili come le altre, il che è assai difficile a spiegarsi facendo perno sui principii che regolerebbero i drammi in prosa; e, tanto per fare un esempio, la scena in cui Amleto, sul punto di partire forzatamente per l'Inghilterra, incontra Fortebraccio di Norvegia e il suo esercito mentre marciano alla volta della Polonia.[11]

NECESSITÀ DI UN BUON REGISTA E DI UNA BUONA COMPAGNIA

Ho notato di sopra che per ottenere il successo d'un dramma in versi è necessario qualcosa di più che non un poeta drammatico: è necessario, cioè, anche un buon regista, una compagnia di buoni attori e, infine, un pubblico preparato. Anche altre cose sono necessarie: ci dovrebbero essere parecchi poeti drammatici nel corso di parecchie generazioni: almeno una generazione per dissodare il terreno e un'altra generazione per portare la messe a maturità. Non posso fare a meno di considerare me e gli altri poeti che tentano ora di scrivere per il teatro inglese, altro che come una generazione di pionieri, la cui opera deve essere giustificata dai nostri discendenti. Ed è anche possibile che una nuova generazione trovi delle condizioni anche più difficili per portare innanzi l'opera di quanto non le abbia trovate la nostra per mettere le basi. Quanto a me, poco m'importa in quale dei paesi europei

fiorisca un nuovo dramma poetico, purché fiorisca in qualcuno di essi: dal momento che tutti noi ne trarremmo giovamento non mette conto in quale tra le grandi e belle lingue venga scritta ancora per la scena della grande poesia drammatica. E se non ne sorge alcuna in alcun luogo, ciò significa che sarà avvenuto qualcosa di più grave che non l'invecchiamento e addirittura la scomparsa d'una particolare forma di alto trattenimento spirituale: la fine del dramma in versi sarebbe una grave perdita spirituale per la civiltà europea, e sarebbe sintomatica di qualcosa di molto più importante di quel che pure non sembrerebbe a prima vista. Ma terminerò proprio a questo punto. Spero almeno di avervi persuasi che, ad onta delle gravi difficoltà per ottenere un largo successo di pubblico, il riportare la poesia a teatro è un'impresa degna di tutti gli sforzi di cui sono capaci i poeti del nostro tempo. E credo ancora che non ci sia mai stata un'epoca nella quale l'opera dei poeti sia stata più importante di quanto non lo sia ai nostri giorni; ed è proprio il fatto che lo scriver versi va diventando sempre più difficile ogni anno che passa, a sottolineare la necessità della poesia. Non sono soltanto le basi materiali della nostra società che sono indebolite: perfino le *lingue* della civiltà europea sono in grave pericolo di decadenza.

T. S. ELIOT

TRANSLATION[1]

Anyone who sets out to defend a play in verse today must agree that the audience can be divided into two groups. There are those who are convinced that verse drama belongs to the past and that a modern play can only be written in prose, and those who are so convinced of the importance of verse drama that they defend it at all costs, thus implying that prose drama has nothing to say. The latter, the lovers of poetry, are in the minority, and nevertheless they are as stubborn as the majority; and I believe that they are both wrong. In my opinion, verse drama, a drama which is at the same time a work of theater and a work of poetry, is still an art form which is absolutely necessary; just as I believe that it must be defended with intelligence and reasonableness if it is to earn the attention of the audience.

My observations are based only on my experience of the English theater, the English audience, and the English language, because these are the limits of my knowledge; however, I think that the problem of verse drama has, or should have, the same importance for any other language and literature. But it is particularly relevant to England because our greatest writer and poet is

also our most important dramatist, and it is on the stage that his greatest poetic gifts were realized. Whatever reason I may put forward to hope that poetry will flower again in the English theater will also serve to give hope that it will flower again, and in the same way, on other stages and in other languages. I believe that in England we have been regretting for three hundred years the disappearance of great poetry from the stage, since we are aware of Shakespeare's superiority in both our poetry and our theater. Many attempts have been made to reunite poetry and theater, and it is interesting to consider the reasons why they have failed so far. Only the last few years – the last fifteen or so – have seen a resurgence in interest in the theater as a vehicle or instrument for poetry, which, though imperfect until now, is by far more promising than any other we have witnessed in the past two centuries. And we would better understand which type of poetry should be used in the theater if we considered the reasons why it has been absent on so many occasions. Let us look at the question first from the point of view of the audience and the difficulties it encounters in a verse drama, and secondly from the point of view of the poet and the difficulties he has *with himself*.

THE THEATER IN ENGLAND UNTIL IBSEN

I think that in England the differences between drama in verse and prose have not become profound until the end of the last century. It is a fact that any play, in verse or prose, had been until that time of little importance. The translation of Ibsen's plays contributed much more than any other work to confer respectability on the theater and give it a *weight of intelligence*, though one can add that some French *pièces à thèse*, skillfully constructed and invested with an ephemeral reasonableness and seriousness, had something to do with it as well. There followed the plays of Bernard Shaw which, written in a prose of literary merit and representing views that appealed to the most independent and rebellious spirits of the time, popularized prose drama as a vehicle for *ideas*. This situation, as our contemporaries experienced it, undoubtedly ensured that the most serious theater-goers, particularly those interested in the dramatic merit of a play, thought there was no room for poetry on the stage; while those who had a particular interest in poetry did not frequent the theater, or, even if they did, they did so to satisfy completely different needs. Poetry lovers maintain that the most important plays of the past – not only the Greek ones but also the greatest literary masterpieces of many modern countries – have been written in verse, and the fact that modern dramas can only be written in prose (and on this

point they agree with theater lovers) makes them believe that we are less gifted than our ancestors.

DRAMA IN PROSE AND IN VERSE

It is obvious that we must not compete with popular theater but only with serious prose plays, and the presumption that prose dramas with a serious subject are in a sense more serious than verse dramas is not unfounded. Prose dramas with a serious subject are an instrument for the propagation of what we call *ideas*; they usually deal with contemporary life and always, whether explicitly or implicitly, with a contemporary *problem* for which they normally tend to suggest a specific solution. Of course such problems, from the point of view in which they are treated by the dramatist, can only be approached and expressed in prose. This is not only because for many generations we have been obsessed with the idea of *realism* and have wanted to see on stage only people like us, used to talking exactly like us, or rather as we would like to talk. Whatever our opinion on the prose drama of our time may be, we must admit that there are certain serious subjects which can be expressed in prose but not in verse, and that a very large part, not only of the thought but also the emotion of modern plays, is such that it can only be entrusted to prose. The supporters of prose drama can reinforce their point by pointing to the weakness and limitations of verse dramas written in the same period of time. The interest aroused by verse dramas has been far more limited, and the characters they depicted, the plot, and the theatrical technique in general were certainly less successful than plays in prose. The verse drama of our time has more often been a poet's excursion in the theater than a dramatist's in poetry: and when we go to the theater we are more willing to forgive bad verse than a bad dramatic structure. Only one exception springs to mind: on the English stage Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, as included in the Old Vic's repertory company, has always been a guaranteed success also with a more mixed and easy-going audience than the one used to listening to the prose plays by the same author.[2] This proves two things: firstly, that a good verse drama can become popular and is likely to be better received than any play in prose; and secondly that what matters more also in a verse drama is its theatrical structure, since one must admit that the English verse translation of *Peer Gynt* is very poor indeed. In general one can say that when people go to the theater to listen to a play written by a poet, they put themselves in the state of mind of someone who has done something meritorious and expects to be slightly bored.

SHAKESPEARE'S POPULARITY

The supporters of poetic drama, unlike those who support serious plays in prose, are on surer ground when they focus on the past. The fact that Shakespeare is still, as he has always been, the most popular English dramatist demonstrates that poetry in itself cannot present a serious handicap. We are right in maintaining that, when we hear great poetry on stage expressed in a way that is typical for a given character who speaks and exemplifies a certain situation, we experience a series of emotions which are far richer than if we listened to the simple prose the same character would have used in real life. And, analyzing such experience, should we perhaps acknowledge that it is richer only because it is twofold, that is to say, it consists in the pleasure derived simultaneously from a great dramatic action and great poetry? Or that it is not a different experience at all which enables us to communicate with a different world of feelings? In truth, sometimes it happens that in some famous verse dramas we forget the dramatic action in our delight in the words in which it is expressed; but often we forget the words themselves, we cease to be conscious of the means of expression in our total absorption in the action. If poetry and theater were combined in such a way as to enable us to experience the pleasure of both art forms at the same time, then we would also realize that a bad play can be a great poem and that, on the other hand, *Hamlet* would still be a great drama even if it had been written in prose.

The weakness of English verse plays written after the end of the great period of poetic drama almost three hundred years ago consists in the fact that these plays were written by poets who were not dramatic poets. I say *dramatic poets* and not *dramatists*: the distinction is important at this point. The reason which is normally given to justify the failure of those plays is that they were works by poets who most of the time did not have a natural disposition for the theater or the opportunity to learn from the living and daily practice of the stage, from which Elizabethan poets learnt the fundamentals of stagecraft. And I believe there are also more hidden causes, namely in the verse technique itself. Studying the plays of three great poets of the last century, Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne – and at least the first two aspired to see their plays put on stage as much as they wanted them to be read – I came to the conclusion that the main reason why they do not look like real plays, and, at the same time, why they belong to that section of these authors' oeuvre which we read with the least delight and interest, is that they used the wrong type of verse. I do not mean that there was a type of verse

which was appropriate in and of itself, nor that they were in a favorable position to find it, and I am not even sure that today we know which type it is or are capable of using it, though I am persuaded that we find ourselves in a better position than theirs. But blank verse, the free iambic pentameter they used, is the blank verse of non-dramatic poetry, despite the fact that the apparent difference between it and that of Shakespeare and his contemporaries lies in the former being more regular. Those poets believed that a play had to be written in the verse form which they had already mastered, namely the verse perfected in their poems. Consequently, when their characters speak on stage they do not give the impression that their conversation is real. In short, we only witness a specific number of actors reciting verses while playing characters to whom no actor would ever be capable of giving life.

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

The difficulty is therefore mainly technical and affects the *verse* rather than the *play*. And, in my opinion, this is a difficulty which is encountered by any poet writing in any language with a rich poetic heritage of many centuries when he wants to revive a poetic form which has already been used by a great master of the past. We must not imitate the past, and on the other hand we must not repudiate it either. Most bad poetry falls into these two categories: that which tries to do what has already been done perfectly in the past, and that which attempts to do something completely different from what has already been done. Poetry must originate from the poetry which already exists in the language, and at the same time it must be *new*; therefore there is no recipe for success. When studying a type of versification suitable for the contemporary theater, I found myself torn between two paths: initially there is the temptation to write poetry which is not dramatic, and one's mind is filled with innumerable echoes of the most important non-dramatic poetry written in one's own language; and later the temptation arises to imitate the meter of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

A verse drama, like any other poetic work, must speak with the voice of its time. It is not necessary, any more than it has been in the past, that the subject matter of the play should be modern: but every writer must speak to his contemporaries using the language of his time. It is first of all a question of meter: one must keep one's ear attuned to contemporary music, because, whether it is your hero Agamemnon or a modern general, he must always speak, in order to be understood, the language of the dramatist and

of his audience. It is only later that the issue of the choice of words arises. In England nowadays the problem consists in finding what could be, once and for all, the type of verse which avoids the association with or the imitation of iambic pentameter, which inevitably brings with it the echo of one or another period of the past tradition of English poetry. I believe that any language, so long as it remains unchanged, is somewhat restricted in the variety of meters; and iambic pentameter will be, in all probability, the *norm* for English verse for a long time to come. But at the same time the verse of a contemporary dramatist must differ enough from traditional blank verse to avoid too close an echo of the past. If the characters speak a language which belongs to the past, they will remind us of characters of the past rather than real human beings.

THERE ARE NO POETIC DRAMAS WRITTEN IN PROSE

Attempts have been made to avoid these problems without, however, discovering new meters. There are no "poetic" dramas written in prose. Maeterlinck's attempt to find a substitute for poetry on stage through the escape into an artificial world of symbols does not appear to have been fruitful: the damage to and the loss of the sense of reality seem too great. A play of this type is, in my opinion, incapable of elevating *real* life to poetry. The attempt by the Irish dramatist J. M. Synge to write "poetic" dramas using the naturally poetic speech of rough Irish peasants also has serious limitations. Using the idiom of people whose speech is naturally poetic means limiting oneself fatally to the narrow world of those people. It will not be possible to write a play which could be enjoyed by the refined audiences in Europe: the characters would be too remote from the life we live.[3] The numerous experiments by William Butler Yeats are of the most interest to us. His plays in verse can be divided into three periods: in the first he used a polished regular blank verse which, when it approximated to poetry, was not sufficiently dramatic; in the second, the period of short lyric plays, he tried hard to get round this difficulty through a prose dialogue interspersed with lyrical interludes in verse. Only in the last period, in the play entitled "The Resurrection" and finally in another one entitled "Purgatory," did he make real progress toward dramatic poetry. To my mind, the latter represents the most significant development in verse technique attempted so far. His successors will have much to learn from the intense lifelong work of this poet in his experimenting with the forms of poetic drama.[4]

FAITH IN POETIC DRAMA

If I have faith that a new poetic drama is at least *possible*, this depends on the general changes in the English language with regard to metrical investigations in this past century. In such a process of experimentation there is inevitably much waste; and versifiers, rejecting completely the nineteenth-century meter, managed all too often to arrive only at the absence of meter. Nevertheless, the positive outcome of similar developments brought about a change in verse technique in an attempt to adapt it to the rhythm of the real cultivated *language* of our time, thereby also facilitating the task of the dramatic poet. We are now sufficiently liberated from the style of nineteenth-century verse to be able to write in the tones and registers of modern conversation, and therefore to study *which simplified verse form* – and which type of verse – we can impose on contemporary language. While a generation ago the writers of verse dramas erred in the attempt to confine their dialogue to a form which made a natural language and conversation impossible, the most common fault in contemporary dramatic poets lies rather in their letting themselves go too freely and in assimilating their dialogue to common speech, to such an extent as to make it incapable of communicating any musical effect, without which poetic drama cannot exist.

The difficulty in finding the type of verse suitable for modern speech – and we should remember that a very great play in any time and language has always used a contemporary idiom – is by no means the *only* obstacle to overcome, though it is the fundamental one. It is obvious, for one thing, that the average dramatic structure, the demands of specific theatrical expedients, and, in short, all other elements intended to capture the audience's attention and keep it gripped and interested until the end, are no less essential for a verse drama than for any other type of play. The dramatic poet of today begins first and foremost by being a poet: he is essentially a poet who crosses over to the theater and not a dramatist who tries to write poetry. If he wants to succeed in the theater, he must train in the theater. A poet of genius can survive also in the utmost solitude and oblivion: he needs, at most, an editor who wants to preserve his poetry in a printed book. If he has a few friends who admire him and can offer the suggestions and criticisms which his poetry needs, along with an editor prepared to spend some money to print his works, he can afford to wait for a while. But a poet who intends to write plays needs a director, indeed one who is himself a man of genius: because he must understand, first of all, what the poet means, smell the possibilities and the ideas through the imperfections and defects, and

even collaborate himself in the outline of the play. Even then there are many things which an aspiring dramatist can only understand from experience: by seeing his play staged; by learning to look at it through the eyes of the actors as well as those of the audience; and by drawing lessons from a gradual appreciation of the defects of a play in order to make improvements in the next one. Each of his plays, therefore, has to be put on stage so that the dramatist can learn effectively; and the staging of a play costs money, particularly when it is not a success. So funds and funders are necessary, as is an audience with a particular interest in this type of theater who tolerates the imperfections, knows and appreciates the dramatist's problems, but is at the same time highly critical. A dramatic poet must begin in small theaters and with small budgets; this depends on the availability of a director and a certain number of actors, who, like the dramatists themselves, will have to *study* a new type of *acting*, because they will need a *style* completely different from that of ordinary plays, as well as a more accomplished diction. The director and actors must be men and women who are keen and capable of devoting themselves to that kind of work for very low salaries. And in addition to a suitable combination of author, director, and actors, one must begin by relying, as I have already said, on a small and experienced audience.

Even if these conditions are met – and we could provide examples of positive results on this front in London both before and after the war – there is always the possibility that a poetic drama cannot progress beyond this point. There is, essentially, the danger of making a larger audience believe that a verse play is a particular type of play meant only for a limited circle of people with a passion for poetry, who are more interested in poetry than the theater, namely a type of play that can only survive if preserved with meticulous care in all its purity from influences of commercialism and professionalism, in other words, a small world of special authors, special directors and actors, and special small theaters. There is basically the danger of giving the impression that a verse play is for artists who cannot be successful in a regular theater and for people who do not frequent the regular theater. Of course any rare and delicate plant must initially be treated with particular care and caution: it must germinate in a specially prepared soil and be encouraged to grow in the heat of a greenhouse. But the main purpose of rearing poetic drama in this way must be to guarantee a growth which will enable it to defend itself from the harshest winds and the most sudden changes in temperature. Verse drama will not fulfill its role in the revival and nourishment of our literary culture until it is able to keep interested an audience who, in

England, can only be attracted and kept interested by Shakespeare. Poetic drama must be able to delight an audience who does not distinguish and is not worried if by chance it happens to listen to poetry or not: an audience who, therefore, aware only of watching an engaging play, is unconsciously captivated by the poetry.

AN INDIRECT COMPLIMENT

At the risk of mortifying my pride, I would like to report what has always seemed to me the greatest compliment – precisely because unintentional – which I have ever received for my *Murder in the Cathedral*. I caught two members of the audience in the foyer discussing the play after the performance: one asked the other if he had ever read any of my poems. "Poems?" answered the other, very surprised, "I really didn't know he wrote poems."

I have dwelt with such insistence on the problems concerning the revival and re-establishment of poetry on the stage that every member of the audience would be justified in asking me this question now: "So what is, in essence, the need for poetry in the theater? Why face all these difficulties when we are already aware of a probable failure, considering that a prose drama can give us all we would expect from a play? Despite all you have been saying, would it not be easier to think that poetic drama is an anachronism and that prose is the means of expression most appropriate for the modern stage?"

I have already maintained that a verse drama is something totally different from a prose drama which is re-written in verse. The *poetry* in a verse drama is of a completely different kind from non-dramatic poetry; in the same way, the effectiveness of a verse drama is different from that of a prose drama: it has its own rules with regard to structure, even though many of these are also valid for a play in prose. Now it would be impossible to explain the difference between a play in prose and one in verse to someone who is incapable of appreciating the difference by himself, and who cannot recognize that the particular type of enjoyment he derives from one is different from the enjoyment he receives from the other. We will not be able to answer the question "What is the merit of poetry?" if it is posed by a person devoid of poetic sensibility. And yet I believe that many people, luckily, feel a different delight when listening to a play in verse from one in prose; and it is perhaps possible to explain and exemplify the difference to these people. Firstly, one must admit that there are certain things which a prose drama can resolve better than a verse drama. It would be impossible to argue that the concept of great drama is inseparable from that of poetry,

and that all prose dramas are but the fruit of an inferior mind designed to satisfy an inferior taste. To express certain planes of reality, if I may say so, certain aspects of social life, prose is by far the most adequate medium: it is the most suitable for the social comedy in which we are required to recognize and be delighted by the very contemplation of our own external conduct. In the past, comedy has always tended, in its development, to turn verse into prose: it seems highly probable to me that if Greek drama had continued to change and develop for a few generations, rather than coming to an end at a certain point, Greek comedy would have ended up being written in prose. However, it is not only certain types of comedy which are more suited to prose, but also some other types of drama, in particular that which is usually called ideological drama, when the dramatist has a particular opinion on the truth of which he intends to persuade his audience, instead of a particular emotion he wishes to convey to it. We can therefore ignore the issue of whether a play in verse is *superior* to a play in prose and concentrate our attention on the person who asks himself the question: "In what do they differ?"

THE MUSICAL STRUCTURE OF VERSE THEATER

I shall say, to begin with, that verse drama avoids certain topics which can be expressed in a prose play to concentrate on topics which can be communicated through music. A sound verse drama has a musical structure just as it has a dramatic one, or it should be specified that the same structure or outline is capable of conveying dramatic as well as musical effects. In other words, the main goal of both verse and prose drama is their plane of reality, just as they have their own subject matter and sphere of action, and they can stray into one another's boundaries and fulfill, to some degree, the task of the other. But prose drama cannot be too far removed from the plane of our ordinary social life: it can show this world of ours from a certain point of view, thus sharpening our perception; it can increase our capacity for knowledge, illustrate unknown aspects of this world, of relations between one person and another and the effects they have on each other; it can, in short, enrich people more than the ordinary spectacle of life. The characters are discrete and distinct individuals who lead the same kind of existence of which we are normally aware. But beyond the edge of classifiable and definable everyday emotions there lies a sort of fringe of indefinite extent of feelings which we are capable of observing, so to speak, out of the corner of our eye, namely in moments of distraction: this fringe can be represented

in a dramatic action only through poetry. In verse as well as in prose drama no character is allowed to express himself in a way contrary to his character; but in a verse drama he can also express himself *beyond* his character and introduce us to a world of feelings of which we are usually unaware. A verse drama, in short, can express in words feelings which otherwise can only be apprehended in music.

ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST SCENE OF *HAMLET*

I think the best way to clarify my thought is to analyze an example of poetic structure taken from a scene of a great and famous drama which everyone knows, either in the original or in translation. This scene is a good example because it is the first scene of the play, and therefore occurs before any of the moments of greatest poetic intensity; because it is not one of those scenes in which you would expect the poetic element to be most conspicuous; because it is, from purely dramatic standards, a very effective opening scene, in the way in which it sets the key for the play and captivates the audience's interest in its main theme; and, lastly, because it is the first scene of *Hamlet*.

What we notice, after a careful *reading* of this scene, is the astonishing variation of style in a scene in which nothing is superfluous. Such variety has an effect on us as we watch the play without our being aware of it. The first twenty-two lines are built out of the simplest words and the most homely idiom. To reach the point at which he could write those twenty-two lines, Shakespeare had passed many years in writing for the stage. There is nothing quite so simplified and sure in his earlier work. It took him years to develop conversational, *colloquial* poetry beyond the monologue of the character part – where the simplicity and homeliness of the speech is something we tend to recognize – into the quick dramatic dialogue. No poet has begun to master dramatic poetry until he can write lines of verse which are like these *transparent*: that is to say, you listen not to the poetry as poetry, but to the meaning of poetry. When you listen to the opening of *Hamlet*, you cannot distinguish whether the characters are speaking verse or prose; what you do notice immediately is the frosty night, the officers keeping watch. The verse makes its effect upon us, we have a different and fuller response than we should have to prose; we are aware of the officers keeping watch on the battlements of Elsinore, and of the foreboding of an ominous action. There are, no doubt, moments in which the dramatic poet will draw attention only to the poetry – and there is one such moment in this scene

– but the great dramatic poet is one who can make us forget, at the right moment, that there is any distinction between poetry and prose.

From the short, brusque ejaculations of the beginning, suitable to the situation and the character of the watchmen, but not expressing more character than is needed for the immediate purpose, the verse glides into a slower movement after the appearance of the two aristocratic courtiers, Horatio and Marcellus:

> Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy . . .[5]

and this movement changes again on the appearance of Royalty, the ghost of the King, to the solemn and sonorous:

> Who art thou, that usurp'st this time of night . . .[6]

A note of majesty is suggested in the use of the verb *usurp* and in the allusion skillfully reminding us *whose* ghost this is:

> So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
> He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.[7]

There is an abrupt change of rhythm in Horatio's words to the ghost on its second appearance; this staccato movement is checked by the words

> We do it wrong, being so majestical,
> To offer it the show of violence . . .[8]

and the scene is resolved with a series of verses which *we hear as poetry*. Marcellus says:

> It faded on the crowing of the cock.
> Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
> Wherein Our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> The bird of dawning singeth all night long . . .[9]

and Horatio answers:

> So have I heard and do in part believe it.
> But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
> Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill;
> Break we our watch up.[10]

Now I believe that in this scene there is a kind of musical pattern which checks and reinforces our emotions, as we watch the play, without our

knowing it. I observed that in these last words of Marcellus there is a deliberate emergence of the poetical from contingent events. When we hear the lines

> But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
> Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill;

we are lifted for a moment beyond character, but with no sense of any unfitness in Horatio's being the speaker. The change in tone and language in this scene obeys laws which are musical as well as dramatic. And note that the two poetic lines of Horatio which I have quoted twice are prefaced by a line of the simplest colloquial speech which might be either verse or prose:

> So have I heard and do in part believe it

and that he follows them abruptly with a phrase which is hardly more than a stage direction:

> Break we our watch up.

THE DRAMATIC AND MUSICAL DOUBLE PATTERN

It would be interesting to pursue this question of what we may call the "double pattern" – dramatic and musical – in a great poetic drama. I believe that an analysis of Shakespeare's last plays would show an ever-growing development in the completeness and complexity of the musical pattern in the plays taken as a whole: I have chosen only one scene from a single play for brevity and clarity. Even in *Hamlet*, a play which has a great deal of what one normally regards as defective and irregular structure, I cannot find anything that could be omitted as superfluous or irrelevant. When I first saw the play entire – as most productions of *Hamlet* omit many scenes – I realized that the parts which are usually omitted were as indispensable as the others, which is very difficult to justify on the basis of the principles governing prose drama; for example, the scene in which Hamlet, about to be forced to leave for England, meets Fortinbras of Norway and his army as they march toward Poland.[11]

NEED FOR A GOOD DIRECTOR AND A GOOD COMPANY

I observed above that in order to have a successful verse drama something more than a dramatic poet is necessary, namely a good director, a company of good actors and finally an informed audience. Other things

are necessary too: there should be many dramatic poets over many generations: at least one generation to break the ground and another to bring the cultivation to maturity. I cannot help seeing myself and other poets who are now attempting to write for the English theater as a generation of pioneers whose work must be justified by our descendants. It is also possible that a new generation will find the conditions to continue this work even harder than ours has found it in laying the foundations. I am not concerned in which European country a new poetic drama begins to flower, provided it flowers somewhere: since we would all benefit, it is not important in which of the great and beautiful languages first-rate dramatic poetry is written for the stage. And if this does not happen anywhere, it means that something more serious than the ageing or even the disappearance of a particular form of high intellectual entertainment has occurred: the end of verse drama would be a great spiritual loss for European civilization and symptomatic of something far more important than what appears at first sight. But I will end on this point. I hope to have at least persuaded you that, despite the serious difficulties in having success with a large audience, bringing poetry back to the theater is an undertaking worthy of all the efforts of which the poets of our time are capable. And I still believe that there has never been a time in which the poets' work has been more important than it is today; it is precisely the fact that writing verse is becoming more and more difficult with every passing year that highlights the need for poetry. It is not merely the material foundations of our society which are weakened: even the *languages* of European civilization are in serious danger of decay.

NOTES

1. "Poetry in the Theatre," a lecture delivered in Rome on 9 Dec 1947 at 6:00 p.m., under the auspices of the British Council in conjunction with *La fiera letteraria*, in the Aula magna of the Liceo Visconti, Piazza del Collegio Romano. TSE was in Rome on a British Council tour organized by Ronald Bottrall from 8 to 16 Dec. An audience of 850 turned out in pouring rain for the lecture. TSE was introduced by G. B. Angioletti and thanked in a short speech by Bottrall, after which he read three of his poems.

The lecture was first delivered in Stockholm in May 1942 during a British Council tour of Sweden also organized by Bottrall. TSE had written to John Hayward on 30 Mar 1942 that he was "grinding out two lectures to offer to the Swedes – I have just done one of them, well ahead of schedule like American battleships, on 'Poetry in the Theatre'" (King's). TSE had proposed a lecture on Poe for Rome, but when he learned that Bottrall was concerned about the subject, he wrote to him on 4 Nov 1947: "Argles had already told me that there were doubts in your mind about the Poe lecture. I am therefore rewriting the Stockholm lecture on Poetry in the

Theatre and hope that that will do." In the event, on the evening of 12 Dec, at the Villa Patrizi, TSE gave a second lecture on "Poe and his Influence on European Literature." In spite of the general strike that affected travel, 550 attended. "This is a really remarkable testimony to Mr. Eliot's reputation," Bottrall reported, "as at least 90% of the audience must have had to walk, many of them two or three miles."

Bottrall wrote a two-page synopsis of "Poetry in the Theatre" for his six-page report of 8 Jan 1948 to the British Council, adding that "I regard Mr. Eliot's visit as one of the most successful we have ever had." The report and synopsis with MS corrections in an unidentified hand, probably Bottrall's, are in the National Archives (BW 83/3, vol 573 [1945-49]); a copy of the synopsis is in King's (P34e). "Poetry in the Theatre" was translated into Italian anonymously and published as "La poesia nel teatro" in *La fiera letteraria*; the subtitles were evidently added by the editors of the magazine. The original English text, which has not been preserved, was revised again and delivered in Germany in Oct 1949 as "The Aims of Poetic Drama" (7.376) and published after extensive revision as "Poetry and Drama" in 1951 (7.589).

2. *Peer Gynt* (1867), Ibsen's last and best-known play in verse, was first published in an English translation by William and Charles Archer in 1892. It was mounted at the Old Vic in 1922 with Russell Thorndike as Peer and revived at the same theater in Sept 1935. The play was produced by the Old Vic Company at the New Theatre between Aug 1944 and Apr 1947.

3. In "Poetic Drama To-Day and To-Morrow" (1940), TSE maintained that "the characters of Congreve or of Synge speak in a common rhythm and a common idiom, developed far beyond the formlessness of ordinary speech. That the rhythm and the idiom is based upon the actual speech of the society to which their plays are related, I do not deny . . . this is a quality which the best prose drama shares with the best verse drama: that the dramatist neither echoes the speech of a past age, nor invents an idiom unrelated to any age, but develops the best speech of the men and women whom he has known who talk his own language" (6.93).

4. The first version of Yeats's prose play "The Resurrection" appeared in the *Adelphi* in June 1927, the rewritten version in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1931). In his "Lecture Notes for English 26" (1933), TSE wrote: "A late work: The Resurrection. // Yeats kept the real spirit of the theatre alive: whatever is going is in his debt. Myself and Auden" (4.777). Published in 1939, "Purgatory" was first produced the preceding year at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. In "Yeats" (1940), TSE remarked that "Yeats did not quite invent a new metre, but the blank verse of his later plays shows a great advance towards one; and what is most astonishing is the virtual abandonment of blank verse metre in 'Purgatory'" (6.85).

5. I.i.23 (Marcellus to Horatio and Bernardo)

6. l. 46 (Horatio to Ghost)

7. ll. 62-63 (Horatio to Marcellus)

8. ll. 143-44 (Marcellus to Horatio and Bernardo)

9. ll. 157-60 (Marcellus to Horatio and Bernardo)

10. ll. 165-68 (Horatio to Marcellus and Bernardo)

11. Act IV, scene iv

UNESCO Policy [II]

To the Editor of the *Continental Daily Mail* (Paris)

Continental Daily Mail (26 Dec 1947) 2

Sir, – I appreciate highly the mansuetude with which M. Thomas, the Assistant Director-General of Unesco, has replied to my comments in his letter in your columns of December 10: and in justice to Unesco as well as to myself, I should like to dispose of one or two misunderstandings.[1]

When I suggested that the magnitude of the task of educational reconstruction was such that it might well employ all the resources of Unesco, I was not thinking primarily of *financial* resources: not, certainly, of those monies allocated to it by the mandatory Governments for its running expenses.

I was thinking of resources of brain-power, of the time of men and women capable of coping with such problems. Such resources also are far from unlimited; such resources also can be frittered away in the attempt to do too many things at once.

Furthermore, I was not unaware of the claims of devastated Asia, or of the obligation of Unesco to attempt to meet them.

I did indeed suggest that the resources of Unesco (in the denotation of the word "resources" which I had in mind) might well be fully occupied, and even strained, if they were devoted to the problems of Europe alone.[2]

But the chief distinction which I wished to draw was between work of reconstruction after the ravages of war, and work of new enterprises of a kind never before undertaken. The needs of the former are so great and so urgent, that the second might well await their turn.

The Director-General, in his letter upon which my own letter was a commentary, referred to schemes on the Amazon, in Haiti, and in British West Africa; and his letter did not give me the impression that these schemes were directly relevant to the work of reconstruction after war damage.[3]

I am myself cognizant of a scheme for translating the "classics" of every living language into every other – a scheme, it seemed to me, which might occupy the time of many persons (voluntary helpers as well as staff of Unesco) who could at present be better employed.[4]

There is a still more important difference between reconstruction and new construction.

The lines of the former are relatively clear: if something has been good and has been destroyed or disorganised we need no great originality to discover what to do to rebuild or reorganise it.

But fresh enterprise in these fields means a fresh point of view; it means a philosophy, whether overt or undisclosed or unconscious. Where does the philosophy come from? What congress of profound thinkers decided, after patient study, that in 1947 we should set about to teach everybody in the world to read and write?[5]

From what premisses, and by what course of reasoning, did they arrive at this conclusion? Had they seriously discussed the question, whether or not it is a good thing that all the denizens of the world should precipitately be instructed in these perilous rudiments?

The last thing I wish to do is to reproach the Director of Unesco and his chief permanent staff, for attempting whatever they are under obligation to their employers to attempt. But it is not sufficient to be told that the charter, or the constitution, of Unesco requires that certain activities be set on foot.

M. Thomas speaks of the "explicit mandate from the member Governments."[6] To whom may we address those criticisms which concern policies for which the Director and his staff have no responsibility?

Yours, etc.,

T. S. ELIOT

24, Russell Square, London, W.C.1.

NOTES

1. TSE wrote in response to Jean Thomas's letter, printed under the heading "Unesco has to think of the lands outside Europe, too" in the issue of 10 Dec 1947 (2). TSE received a copy from the Paris editor Noel Barber: "As you will see in the enclosed copy of today's Continental Daily Mail, your very interesting letter on Unesco [7.44] has brought a reply from the Assistant Director-General. If you think his arguments call for another letter from you, I would be very happy to publish it." TSE's letter is dated 20 Dec. Barber broke the text of TSE's five-paragraph letter into smaller journalistic paragraphs; the letter also appeared in the London *Daily Mail*.

2. Jean Thomas (1900-83), French educator and assistant director-general of UNESCO, wrote in his letter: "As for the fundamental education campaign, may I suggest that in determining the importance of this work Mr. Eliot is speaking as a European, with the European's tendency to forget that the peoples of Africa and Asia represent the great majority of mankind" (2).

3. Huxley explained in his letter of 30 Oct that Field Science Co-operation offices had been set up in Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, and Nanking, and that work on the "campaign against illiteracy" had begun in Haiti, China, and British East Africa (4).

4. Huxley remarked in his letter that UNESCO had undertaken work on "the law of copyright, translation of the classics, and the revision of textbooks" (4). In a letter of 9 Oct 1947 to the chairman of the Arts Council Sir Ernest Pooley, TSE expressed the hope "that UNESCO may abandon this project of translating all the classics into all the languages. It seems to me, indeed, a most undesirable enterprise" (King's H2e). He also wrote to Hope Mirrlees on 16 Oct 1947: "I have also to write a vehement letter to Unesco giving my reasons for refusing to join a Co-operating Body and a 'working party' and telling them how very misguided it is of them to want to translate all the 'classics' of all the modern languages (including presumably Ruthenian and Canarese) into all the other modern languages, and that it is *not* going to stop peoples from quarrelling with each other but probably would make them more combative."

5. See 7.45

6. "The Secretariat, however, has an explicit mandate from the member Governments of the organisation to undertake certain other tasks" (2).

Ein Telegramm von T. S. Eliot[1]

Der Turm, 2 (1947) 227

Bin durch Krankheit leider verhindert, einen Brief zu schicken. Grüße und Dank allen, die für diese Veranstaltung verantwortlich sind und die daran teilnehmen, und dem Publikum Wiens. Es gibt keine Hauptstadt Europas, deren Anerkennung mir mehr Befriedigung geben würde. Ich hoffe, dass die Landsleute von Hugo von Hofmannsthal mein Stück schätzen werden, so wie sie sicherlich seine Idee und seinen Geist anerkennen. Eliot.[2]

TRANSLATION[1]

Am unfortunately prevented through illness to send a letter. Greetings and thanks to all those who are responsible for this production and those taking part, and the audience in Vienna. There is no other capital in Europe whose recognition would give me more satisfaction. I hope that Hugo von Hofmannsthal's fellow countrymen will appreciate my play just as they respect his thought and his spirit. Eliot.[2]

NOTES

1. TSE sent this telegram on the occasion of the first public reading of *Murder in the Cathedral*, produced by the Austrian Cultural Association in Vienna in mid-Feb. The production was translated by Werner Riemerschmid under the script supervision of Christian Moeller. Ewald Balser read the part of the archbishop, and Liselotte Schreiner read the chorus of women from Canterbury. TSE wrote to Egon Seefehlner, editor of *Der Turm*, on 26 Feb: "I must thank you for your very kind telegram which gave me great pleasure. I was gratified to learn that my own telegram reached you in time for the performance and hope that it conveyed some of my cordial good feeling toward the company and the audience. It was very gratifying to know that the reading of my play was so well received in Vienna, and I hope that this may be followed in due course by a full dramatic presentation as has been done in the British Zone of Germany."

2. TSE wrote to A. Colvin-Smith on 3 Apr: "Thank you for your letter of the 17th March and for so thoughtfully sending me the cuttings from the Vienna press about *Murder in the Cathedral*. As you suggest, the Viennese critics seem to be a little backward, but one must make allowances for this having been merely a reading and not a complete performance. One or two of the comments made me a little rueful about my reference to Hugo von Hofmannsthal, for the last thing in my mind was any intention to imply that my play was of exactly the same type as his."

Letter to Edith Perkins. Presentation of lantern slides to the Royal Horticultural Society

On 2 Mar 1948, TSE spoke to the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) at the formal presentation of 465 colored lantern slides of famous English and Scottish gardens, collected by Mrs. John Carroll Perkins (1869-1958) of Boston, mostly while resident in Chipping Campden. As reported in the *Evesham Journal and Four Shires Advertiser* of 13 Mar, under the title "A Generous Gift / Unique Slides for Britain," "Mr. Eliot spoke in moving terms of Mrs. Carroll Perkins as one who loved beauty that was visible to the eyes, and yet who had lost all sight beyond power of recovery. It was her great love for England that prompted her to give this collection of her own making to be kept in England and for England. He then formally asked Lord Aberconway to accept the gift" (7). On 3 Mar, TSE wrote to Mrs. Edith Perkins, who was Emily Hale's aunt and whom he addressed in his letters as "Aunt Edith," with the following account of the proceedings.

The presentation took place yesterday afternoon and I hasten to tell you of it. It was in the lecture hall above the large exhibition hall, where they were holding their show of early spring flowers, outdoor blooms from Cornwall and Scilly,[1] and some fine glass-grown spring flowers, which had been flown over from Holland, also azaleas, etc., as well as spring bulbs. They took me out on to a balcony overlooking the hall, from which I got a good panorama view and the hall was quite crowded, people standing.

Lord Aberconway introduced me with a few words, and I spoke for about ten minutes, recalling our visits to Cotswold gardens and speaking of what you had done to spread a knowledge and appreciation of British gardens in America, and the last lecture at Petersham.[2] Then I formally presented the slides, all except what were to be shown, in their boxes on the table; and Aberconway, a quaint little Scot he is, ended with a tribute to the slides themselves and to your generosity.[3]

After that, Mr. Taylor, who recalled that in his photographic tours he always either preceded or followed you about the country, showed about 65 slides and commented on them and on the gardens.[4] I think the audience was delighted with them; there appeared to be two elements, the more and the less expert. The latter tended to applaud the more picturesque scenes such as Berkeley Castle,[5] and the former the details which showed some particularly happy combination of flowers or skilful adaptation of the natural features of the place.

I saw Effie Cresswell and also Mrs. Bennet-Clark.[6] Indeed, it was difficult to escape the latter, both before and after. She said she was reporting the occasion for the Evesham paper, and I hope that both she and Mrs. Cresswell will write to you about the occasion. The only fly in Mrs. Bennet-Clark's ointment was her disappointment that they did not show a slide of her garden, she is evidently very proud of the fact that it is included in the collection. At the end Lord Aberconway proposed a vote of thanks to yourself and again spoke of the beauty and value of the slides. He assured me that the utmost care would be taken of them; that all the slides would be shown from time to time in various groupings and selections and that they would be exhibited in other parts of the country as well.

Mr. Taylor's selection was diverse, as I was sure was right for the sample showing, specimens from every part of England and Scotland. I found it, myself, extremely poignant for several reasons; and it all seemed symbolic of a beauty and order which is vanishing from the world and which none of us will see again. Mr. Taylor ended very suitably I thought with one or two slides of small gardens, as a kind of reminder of what could still be done under modern conditions.

I was very proud and happy to have the honor of taking part in this way.

NOTES

1. The Isles of Scilly are thirty-five miles southwest of the coast of Cornwall.

2. The *Evesham Journal* recalls Mrs. Perkins's illustrated lectures given "some ten years ago" (7). These may have been at the Petersham Nurseries, Covent Garden; however, TSE refers to her last "Garden Lecture" in Petersham, Massachusetts, on 18 July 1946, at which he read the poem he wrote for her in 1935, "A Valedictory / Forbidding Mourning: to the Lady of the House" (*L7* 778-80; *Poems1* 292-93).

3. Henry McLaren, 2nd Baron Aberconway (1879-1953), industrialist and horticulturist who developed the Bodnant Garden at his family estate, Bodnant House, was president of the RHS.

4. George Taylor, Scots botanist (1904-93), member of the RHS, at this time deputy keeper of botany at the British Museum, later keeper; he was knighted in 1962. The slides of gardens shown included Hidcote Manor, near Chipping Campden, about which TSE wrote to "Aunt Edith" on 11 July 1948, announcing "that, by arrangement between the National Trust and the Royal Horticultural Society, the gardens of Hidcote Manor are to be taken over and preserved. . . . I was particularly pleased, because I remember so well your taking me there; and of all the gardens I have visited (mostly with you) that is the one I loved the best."

5. Gardens surrounding the twelfth-century Berkeley Castle in the town of Berkeley, Gloucestershire.

6. Mrs. Effie Cresswell of Charingworth Manor, Chipping Campden, and Mrs. Elizabeth Constance Bennet-Clark (1902-76) of Darby's House, Chipping Campden, were gardening

friends of Mrs. Perkins. They were formally presented to the RHS by TSE. Mrs. Bennet-Clark's husband, Thomas Archibald Bennet-Clark (1903-75), was professor of botany at King's College London.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The article for the *Evesham Journal*, marked "(Contributed)," was written by Mrs. Bennet-Clark, who, TSE states in his letter, "said she was reporting the occasion to the Evesham paper." TSE has typed the text of the article from the issue of 13 Mar and included it with the typed text of his letter of 3 Mar, both evidently prepared for reading out to blind Mrs. Perkins. The text of TSE's letter, typed on the same machine, is without salutation or close, and is preceded by an identifying title: "Presentation of Lantern Slides, by T. S. Eliot / The Royal Horticultural Society, London, England, March 2, 1948." Included together, the CC of each TS is in the Houghton: bMS Am 1691 (48). As the text of TSE's presentation for the public event is no longer extant, his summary of the speech and occasion in the letter is printed here.

Views and Reviews: "Our Culture"

A review of *Our Culture: Its Christian Roots and Present Crisis.* Edward Alleyn Lectures 1944, ed. V. A. Demant

London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1947. Pp. vii + 113.

The New English Weekly, 32 (4 Mar 1948) 203-04[1]

This volume consists of six lectures delivered at Alleyn's College, Dulwich, in the summer term of 1944 and the winter term of 1945.[2] The lecturers were chosen by Canon Demant, who appears as editor of the volume and himself contributes the first and the last lecture. The other contributors are Professor H. A. Hodges, Mr. Christopher Dawson, Miss Dorothy L. Sayers and Mr. Maurice B. Reckitt.

It will not be disputed that Dr. Demant, as organiser of the series of lectures, was the most suitable choice that could have been made, nor can Dr. Demant's choice of lecturers leave much opening for criticism. In a comprehensive symposium there are other names the absence of which would be regretted – such as those of Mr. Mairet and Dr. K. E. Barlow.[3] This was not a symposium, but a series of lectures limited to six; and within the limitations I do not think that Dr. Demant could have chosen better. Furthermore, the book leaves an impression of a natural and unstudied unity: not that obtained by formal discussions among the contributors and by their organised criticism of each others' papers; but a unity arising from the concord of people who are familiar with, and whose thinking has been influenced by, each others' previous writing. Each essay, moreover, might stand as an introduction to the more extensive work of the same authors in the same fields: Mr. Dawson, for instance, in Christian Education; Miss Sayers, in Christian Aesthetics; Mr. Reckitt, in the Christian organisation of society; and the two essays by the editor could be recommended as prolegomena to *The Religious Prospect*, *Christian Polity* and *Theology of Politics*.[4]

There remains the essay by Professor Hodges, entitled *Our Culture: Its Thought*, which takes up a somewhat different position. It cannot be considered, like the other essays, as an introduction to a subject upon which the author has more fully expressed his mind elsewhere. It is rather an exploration of new territory. Professor Hodges covers a good deal of ground in a

few pages, in reviewing the history of Christian thought from mediaeval times to the present day; and his argument is too condensed to be summarised. While he appears at one point to approximate to Dr. Demant's important distinction between *aims* and *assumptions* (a distinction which should be referred back to the distinction between *dogma* and *doctrine* established in *The Religious Prospect*),[5] he holds opinions which would seem to isolate him from his colleagues in this book. One difference is expressed in his assertion that "Christianity did not make the medieval world or its ideas." He goes on to say

> Medieval society sprang from causes inherent in an impoverished agricultural economy with primitive methods of production and distribution and harassed by military insecurity. [19]

The simple-minded reader, proceeding to Mr. Dawson's essay, which follows that of Professor Hodges, finds these words:

> If we admit, as I think we all do in principle, that Western culture was a Christian creation, that Europe is the daughter of Christendom, we ought to pay much more attention to this truth in our educational theory and practice than we have done in the past. [37]

The "truth" to which Mr. Dawson has just drawn our attention is that

> The time has come for us to retrace our steps, to see what we have lost in two centuries of economic progress and world conquest, and to consider how we can recover contact with the essential realities on which the existence of our civilization depends. [37][6]

But for Professor Hodges there can be no question of retracing our steps. He believes that a stable society (I do not know how long he would require a society to stay put to deserve to be called "stable") will take shape; but

> There is no reason to think that this, any more than its predecessors, will or could be created by Christian initiative. It will result from the operation of social forces in accordance with the laws, still imperfectly known, which govern such processes. [34]

He then tells us that "there is no decisive reason" why the new order should not turn out to be one which Christianity can "accept and bless" [34]. This is moderate comfort for those who are apprehensive lest the new order may be one that Christianity must reject and anathematise: but the important

point is that Christianity cannot form a society, it can only accept and bless it, as Christianity accepted and blessed the Middle Ages. It would not seem, therefore, that there can be a "Christian culture";[7] or that our culture, or that of the future, can have "Christian roots."

If Professor Hodges and Mr. Dawson were to discuss the carving of the same bird, they would not agree as to where to find the joints. The question of joints is really a question of words, and therefore a vital issue. I doubt whether the term "Christian culture" means much to Professor Hodges: I suspect rather that for him "Christianity" means "Bible Christianity," and that for him *all* culture is profane. The world is handed over to the non-Christian sociologist – or to the sociologist who may happen to be a Christian, but who keeps his Christianity and his sociology apart – for I presume it is the sociologist who will proceed to a more perfect knowledge of those laws, "still imperfectly known," which govern such processes as social forces. And I think that there is here something irreconcilable, because it springs from what Dr. Demant calls *assumptions* or from what he calls *dogmas*; and that what separates Professor Hodges from the other contributors is that his point of view is that of a Protestant influenced by Marxism.[8] This conjecture is hardly susceptible of proof; but if it is justified, it gives a peculiar interest to Professor Hodges' contribution.

It is, however, Dr. Demant who has made especially his own the subject indicated by the title of the book.[9] The present reviewer has probably been too deeply influenced by Dr. Demant's thought to be an impartial critic;[10] he can only say that in these two lectures will be found a very lucid exposition of some of the most important of them,[11] and that the book would be important even if it consisted of these two essays alone.

The reader is, inevitably, left with the question: "What is to be done about it?" Another essay might well be written, to answer this question by indicating how the question should be put. It is obvious enough that religious faith cannot be restored to the mass of mankind by any methods based on observation of the causes of its decline. The decline itself has come about by a confluence of forces, most of which have happened through the wills of men to quite other ends. Only to the same extent as that to which this decline of religion has come about through deliberate apostasy, can a revival come about through deliberate evangelism. It would seem that the decay of faith has led to the decay of culture, and that the decay of culture brings about an environment in which faith cannot flourish. We cannot restore religion simply by producing a Christian culture, and we cannot restore culture

simply by religious zeal; in either case it would be a spurious religion and a spurious culture; and we appear at this point to be condemned to a vicious circle and a fatalistic acceptance of defeat. Undoubtedly, studies such as those which form this book are at least a saving reminder that the New Jerusalem will not be built by setting up a Ministry of Heaven-and-Earth Planning; and can therefore save us from a waste of effort in the wrong directions; and can restrain the Christian from the constant temptation to which he is exposed, in the environment and in the temper of our time, to overlook his commitment to a doctrine of Grace. But they have not only a negative value. To be told that we can do nothing is the prescription of despair; to be told that we can only do a little, is more encouraging to the intelligent than all the flattery of optimism. The result to which such investigations should lead, as those which Dr. Demant has assembled, is that our study of them will affect our decisions in particular choices of behaviour in matters superficially insignificant or superficially remote.[12] It is in the application of general observations to unique instances that we have our opportunity; and it is to illustrating the application of Dr. Demant's analysis to the small, and apparently unrelated occasions of individual decision, that another essay might be addressed.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE wrote to Philip Mairet, editor of the *NEW*, on 16 Feb 1948: "I enclose a note on the Culture book you gave me. I am by no means satisfied with it but it is the best I could do in the time, and having just sent in my own book to the printers I am probably a little stale and my interest in the subject not quite so vivid as it ought to be. So please reject this if you think it had better not be used, and I will send you back the book."

2. Alleyn's College of God's Gift was founded in 1619 in Dulwich, south London, by the wealthy Elizabethan actor Edward Alleyn (1566-1626). In the preface to *Our Culture*, Demant explains why the Alleyn lectures were spread out over two terms: "The lectures were delivered in the period of the flying-bomb attacks upon London in which Dulwich suffered very heavily. . . . Before the course was completed the Chaplain lost his house and the College was so seriously damaged that the later lectures had to be postponed for six months" (v-vi).

3. A contributor to the *Criterion*, Kenneth Elliott Barlow (1906-2000) was a medical doctor whose books *The Discipline of Peace* (1942), *The State of Public Knowledge* (1946), and *A Home of their Own* (1946) were published by Faber.

4. Christopher Dawson, "The Crisis of Christian Culture: Education"; Dorothy L. Sayers, "Towards a Christian Aesthetic"; Maurice B. Reckitt, "Work and the Crisis of our Culture"; Demant's "The Aims and Assumptions of our Culture"; and "Our Culture: Its Religion." Demant's works *The Religious Prospect* (London: F. Muller, 1939); and *Christian Polity* (London:

Faber, 1936). TSE probably refers to Demant's recently published collection *Theology of Society: More Essays in Christian Polity* (London: Faber, 1947), which contains "The Theology of Politics" (213-18), a reprint of the article by the same title in *Christendom: A Journal of Christian Sociology*, 13 (Sept 1943), 74-77. "His book *Christian Polity* seems to me a very valuable contribution to Christian thinking," TSE wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury on 29 Mar 1939.

5. In "The Aims and Assumptions of our Culture," Demant writes: "In the 'democratic' communities the aims of men are on the whole still those of European civilization, so largely formed by Christian outlooks; but the assumptions, the things they take for granted and the habits considered normal, have been formed by influences which are opposed to the aims. This contradiction is not conscious. In the totalitarian countries, on the other hand, the conflict has been solved by abolishing the aims and finding new ones to fit in with the assumptions and habits" (3). In the introduction to *The Religious Prospect*, which TSE defined as "the best book written in England in the last year or two" (to John Betjeman, 18 Sept 1939), Demant stated: "I use the term 'doctrine' for the consciously held theories, and the term 'dogma' for the assumptions that are taken for granted as the absolutely right way of looking at reality" (20).

6. This quoted sentence precedes the previous one on page 37.

7. In the copy of the review he gave to John Hayward, TSE underlined "would" and "can" in this sentence and put a question mark in the margin (King's HC2.1.3[11]).

8. Hodges was active within the Church of England and was soon to represent it at the first assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in Aug-Sept 1948. TSE would have been familiar with Hodges's essay "Christianity in an Age of Science," printed as a supplement to the *Christian News-Letter* (11 Feb 1942) and featuring a paragraph entitled "Nietzsche and Marx."

9. In "The Aims and Assumptions of our Culture," Demant clarified: "The purpose of these lectures is to gain some insight into the Christian Religion by examining what has been its influence upon our culture, what is happening to our culture to-day, and what is required if the positive gains of that culture are to be preserved and developed" (1).

10. TSE acknowledged the influence that Demant's work exercised on him in the prefaces to *ICS* (5.683) and to *NTDC* (7.195). He often quoted Demant approvingly in his essays on social and cultural criticism in the 1930s and 1940s.

11. TSE circled "them" and put a question mark in the margin in the copy he gave to John Hayward.

12. TSE underlined "should" and "will" in this sentence and put a question mark in the margin in the copy he gave to Hayward.

A Sermon Preached in Magdalene College Chapel

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948. Pp. 7, [1].

This is the first time that I have ever spoken in a consecrated building at one of the appointed services of the Church. It may also well be the last. For I should never wish to speak on such an occasion in such a place, were it not a college chapel, and the chapel of a college of which I have the honour and responsibility of being a member. I regard a college as still a kind of monastic institution. But if the Master corresponds to the Abbot, and the President to the Prior, and the Fellows to the Members of the Community, and the undergraduate members to novices, it is not clear what is the case of an Honorary Fellow.[1] He is not a lay-brother, for that status is more appropriate to the porters and gyps, the latter of whom are supplemented in their functions by a number of lay-sisters.[2] I am more in the position of a tertiary – that is, a layman associated with a community, who retires there from time to time to participate in its life and share its rigours and austerities. I have never, it is true, heard of a tertiary being called to the pulpit; but I stand here under authority, at the behest of the President.[3]

I shall not think of what I have to say as a sermon, even a lay sermon. I shall speak of some difficulties of the layman from the layman's point of view and in one particular layman's experience. And by "layman" I shall mean a Christian who is attached to a particular Christian group in a particular place. I think that by "layman" we mean something more than a Christian who is not a priest or minister. It does not signify, for my present purpose, to what Christian communion or sect he belongs, although I deprecate the broadmindedness which affirms that it does not matter to what branch or subdivision of Christianity a man belongs, if that he be a Christian; for, if we say that this does not matter, we soon come to say that it does not matter whether he belongs to *any* communion or sect; and finally we come to accept any man as a Christian merely because he says he is. By a *Christian*, then, I mean a man who professes his adherence to a definite body of Christian believers; by a Christian *layman*, I mean a Christian who is also a member of a particular congregation, meeting regularly for worship in a particular place; and one who is not only a nominal member, but who

recognizes a loyalty to that local congregation and place of worship, and who is willing and eager to serve them.

I remember a remark by a great Christian, Baron von Huegel, an Austrian who lived for most of his life in England and who wrote in English. It is in one of his letters to his niece: he was of course a Roman Catholic, and she had been brought up in the Church of England. It is to the effect that he thought it more important to quicken the belief and strengthen the practice of a man or woman in whatever form of the Christian Faith they had been born to, than to convert them to his own Church.[4] I think that the question of how far, and in what ways, it may be the duty of the Christian layman to try to convert others needs more examination than I am aware of its receiving. I speak for myself. I do not know whether anything I have ever said or written or done has ever contributed to the conversion of anybody: but if such a thing has happened, it has not been from any deliberate design. I have never made any direct attempt to convert anyone. If the thought of this neglect has sometimes troubled my conscience, the thought of attempting to convert anyone causes a feeling of embarrassment which I am sure that many others have experienced too. No one ever attempted to convert *me*; and, looking back on my pre-Christian state of mind, I do not think that such a campaign would have prospered. I was brought up in an environment of that intellectual and puritanical rationalism which is found in the novels of George Eliot – an author greatly admired in my family, though her choice of a pseudonym was deplored.[5] Herbert Spencer's generalized theory of evolution was in my childhood environment regarded as the key to the mystery of the universe.[6] My only conversion, by the deliberate influence of any individual, was a temporary conversion to Bergsonism.[7] It is perhaps impossible to say, in a particular case of conversion to Christianity, how much is due to observation of the outside world and how much to the gradual discovery of oneself; but I am sure that for me the strongest outside influences were negative. Observation of the futility of non-Christian lives has its part; and also realization of the incredibility of every alternative to Christianity that offers itself. One may become a Christian partly by pursuing scepticism to the utmost limit. I owe much, in this way, to Montaigne;[8] something, in this way, to Bertrand Russell's essay, *A Free Man's Worship*: the effect this essay had upon me was certainly the reverse of anything the author intended.[9]

I do not, by any means, say that there are no occasions in which it is right to try to influence another person; but I think that these occasions come

only with a particular relationship between two people, and perhaps only on peculiar occasions. It is a different matter, addressing people collectively, for then one is only aiming at those who choose to listen. But the arts of the park-orator are dangerous except for those who have also had expert spiritual training. To be quick-witted, to be able to lead and twist an argument, to be ready with the witty retort, to be able to turn the laugh on your interlocutor: such gifts may flatter our vanity or nourish our love of power. Certainly we should think enough and read enough to be able to hold our own with people of our own intellectual ability, when the occasion arises. But if we can show that we have made good use of such brains as God has given us in thinking about our faith, and also that we live rather differently because of our faith, I think we shall do the most that most of us can. And when I say "live differently," I do not mean primarily that we lead better lives: I mean that we show our Christianity in the way in which we are aware of our faults and shortcomings, and the way in which we are sorry for them.

Influence by example, however, seems to me still less to be *aimed at*, than influence by persuasion. There are, no doubt, occasions on which the desire to set a good example may be a most praiseworthy motive. In some emergency we may have to pretend that we are not frightened, in order to prevent a panic; there are even occasions on which the desire to be thought well of may be a good motive. But I do not go out to an early communion on a cold morning in order to convert my housekeeper, or to set a good example to the night porter of my block of flats before he goes off duty. If this was my motive, I had better not, for my own sake, go at all; and if the housekeeper and the porter suspected that this was my motive, they would – far from being softened – merely be justifiably irritated by my trying to interfere with their lives. So I think that influence by example can be only the by-product of a Christian life: there are other ways of showing that we are concerned, not solely for our own salvation, but for our neighbour.

There is also a negative side to this question of conversion which is equally important. Besides the problem of converting the world, there is the problem of not being converted by it. In the Epistle for this morning – and that is as near as I come to having a text – are the words: *But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now*. St Paul knew what he was talking about.[10] Christians are still persecuted, but nowadays not usually overtly on the ground that they are Christians, but on some pretext. They are persecuted because they do not hold the approved political views; or one Church is recognized and

controlled, and those Christians are persecuted who belong to the wrong Church; or, being Christians, they are denounced for having collaborated with the Germans during the war, or perhaps with the British or the Americans after it. In the West these things do not yet happen. But persecution is only the extreme limit of discrimination. People prefer to associate with the like-minded to themselves; those who rise to power tend to favour and to promote those who resemble themselves; and when a man, who is not a Christian, has an appointment to make, or a favour to bestow, he may genuinely believe that the candidate who is of his own kidney is more worthy than another candidate who is a Christian. Thus the profession of Christianity might become, if not exactly dangerous, at least disadvantageous; and it is sometimes harder to endure disadvantage than to face danger, harder to live meanly than to die as a martyr. Already, we say, we are a minority. We cannot impose our standards upon that majority when it explicitly rejects them; too often, mingling with that majority, we fail to observe them ourselves. Like every minority, we compound with necessity, learning to speak the language of the dominant culture because those whose language it is will not speak ours; and in speaking their language, we are always in danger of thinking their thoughts and behaving according to their code. In this perpetual compromise, we are seldom in a position to pass judgement upon other Christians, in their peculiar individual temptations: it is hard enough, reviewing our own behaviour, to be sure when we have done the right or the wrong thing. But we can and should be severe in our judgement of ourselves. For most of us the occasion of the great betrayal on the clear issue will never come: what I fear for myself is the constant, daily, petty pusillanimity. I shall no doubt do and say the wrong thing again and again; but the important thing is to be conscious of the error or weakness and of its nature, and then to be sorry for it. For penitence and humility, as is suitable to remember at Mid-Lent, are the foundation of the Christian life.

NOTES

1. TSE, who had been an Honorary Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, since 1939, reluctantly delivered this Lenten sermon on 7 Mar 1948, having written to Kenneth Pickthorn on 9 Jan that "[I] have been inveigled into delivering a sort of sermon in the College Chapel at Evensong." He later recalled in a letter of 24 Mar 1960 to the Chaplain of Queen's College, Dundee, the Reverend S. Roy MacKintosh that "I have only preached one sermon or spoken a discourse which took the place of a sermon, and that was in Magdalene College, Cambridge where any Honorary Fellow is duty bound to take this part in an evening service if the chaplain so

desires." Outsiders were not admitted to the sermon, which was printed as a pamphlet and distributed to members of the college in June 1948.

2. gyp (OED): "At Cambridge and Durham, a college servant, esp. one who attends on one or more undergraduates."

3. TSE wrote to the Master of Magdalene on 9 Jan 1948: "I look forward with less pleasure and with a good deal of trepidation to the Lenten sermon which the President has cajoled or coerced me into delivering in the College Chapel on that Sunday evening."

4. Baron Friedrich von Hügel wrote in a letter to his niece Gwendolen Greene (1878-1959) on 5 May 1919: "Do I want to make you a Roman Catholic? Why, of course, no, Dear, I am busy, not with trying to get you to turn actively 'churchy' even. I am hoping only to get you gradually to see the huge, unique, irreplaceable good that you, as we all, owe to the Church. Even if . . . you came to find it somehow impossible to keep up as much of Church practice . . . as, thank God, you practise now: even then you would . . . feel a deep, deep gratitude to the Church – something like to, though considerably more than, you will come to feel towards ancient Rome and ancient Greece." *Letters from Baron Friedrich von Hügel to a Niece*, ed. Gwendolen Greene (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1928), 31. She eventually converted to Catholicism.

In "Second Thoughts about Humanism" (1929), TSE commented in a footnote: "An interesting infusion of humanism in a remarkable religious personality is shown in the late Baron von Hügel's *Letters to a Niece*" (3.624, n.26). TSE's copy of the book bears his bookplate, signature, and the date 1928, followed by the phrase: "Non nobis, Domine, non nobis" (Psalm 115:1). TSE later lent the book to Emily Hale, and some of his marginalia are meant to indentify for her various people in the Church. On p. 190, next to von Hügel's discussion of Catholicism and Protestantism, TSE wrote: "N.B. the niece was then an Anglican evidently of the Protestant type." See Donald Gallup, "T. S. Eliot, Emily Hale, and the *Letters* of Baron Friedrich von Hügel," *Book Collector*, 42 (Spring 1993), 126-29.

5. In *ASG*, TSE criticized George Eliot for combining her profound moral insight and passion "with the dreary rationalism of the epoch of which she is one of the most colossal monuments" (5.40). He went on to explain in 1937 that "the English rationalism of the nineteenth century – not only that of the popular scientists but that of literary folk like George Eliot and Leslie Stephen – had more in common with Latin rationalism of today; though there was in it a rigid Puritan zeal, a confidence that the disappearance of Christianity would coincide with enlightenment and progress" (5.473-74).

6. Herbert Spencer argued that the principles of physical and biological evolution from simplicity to complexity also apply to the development of human society and the universe in general. TSE often referred to Spencer in his graduate essays, early reviews, and lectures (1.40, 328, 587).

7. In Jan and Feb 1911, TSE attended Bergson's weekly lectures at the Collège de France and remained an enthusiast for a year or so. As he explained in a letter to Shiv Kumar of 21 Jan 1953: "I was certainly very much under [Bergson's] influence during the year 1910-11, when I both attended his lectures and gave close study to the books he had then written, but I passed into a different phase soon afterward."

8. In his introduction to Pascal's *Pensées* (1931), TSE argued that Montaigne "succeeded in giving expression to the scepticism of *every* human being. For every man who thinks and lives by thought must have his own scepticism, that which stops at the question, that which ends in denial,

or that which leads to faith and which is somehow integrated into the faith which transcends it" (4.344-45).

9. In *A Free Man's Worship* (1903), collected in *Mysticism and Logic* (London: Longmans, Green, 1918), which TSE had reviewed (1.690), Russell argues from an atheistic standpoint that "Man's true freedom" lies in his "determination to worship only the God created by our own love of the good, to respect only the heaven which inspires the insight of our best moments" (50). On 14 Mar 1933, TSE had confessed to Ottoline Morrell that "Bertie, because at first I admired him so much, is one of my lost illusions. He has done Evil, without being big enough or conscious enough to Be evil. I owe him this, that the spectacle of Bertie was one contributing influence to my conversion" (*L6* 562-63).

10. Galatians 4:29 (KJV)

Preface for a broadcast of *Murder in the Cathedral* in Hindustani

Broadcast for the BBC Indian Service on 8 Mar 1948. TSE wrote to Aslam Malik of the Indian Service on 12 Feb: "With every desire to help I don't think I could produce anything like thirteen hundred words for you. . . . What I had in mind originally was a very short preamble indeed . . . I might be able to do two or three hundred words, but the most I could offer for this occasion would be a mere note to express my pleasure that the play should be broadcast in Hindustani." TSE sent this preface to Malik on 28 Feb.

It is a pleasure to me to have the opportunity of thanking the B.B.C. for broadcasting a performance of my play in Hindustani; and also to thank Mr. Malik for his enterprise in undertaking such a production, and for the labour and ingenuity which I know he must have expended upon the task of translation.

A few more preliminary words may not be amiss. The play was originally written for production under special conditions at a Festival of Canterbury Cathedral. The subject had there a peculiar appropriateness; for the murder of the Archbishop took place in that Cathedral, nearly eight hundred years ago; and his tomb in the Cathedral was a place of pilgrimage until its desecration in the sixteenth century. I did not anticipate any performance on the London stage; but the original production by Mr. Martin Browne, with Mr. Robert Speaight as the leading actor, was taken to London by Mr. Ashley Dukes, and has been performed at intervals ever since.[1]

The play has also been produced in English over the radio.[2] In some respects, I think that a verse play gains "on the air." For one thing, every listener can hear every word; for another, the poetic images and the rhythms are more readily apprehended, when the eye is not distracted by the action on the stage.

The story of the martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury is one with which every English-speaking person is familiar since childhood. Even to a French, or other European audience the story is little known, and requires more explanation. For us, it represents a crucial moment in English history; for others, it is the story of a foreign saint. But I do not think that it needs more explanation for an Eastern audience than for a European one. The

essential theme is the same for all religious-minded people the world over, whatever their religion: the perpetual conflict between the eternal and divine order, and the temporal and worldly order. To those who live only in and for the latter, the former will always seem folly.

NOTES

1. *Murder in the Cathedral* was first performed in the Chapter House of Canterbury Cathedral from 15 to 22 June 1935, with Robert Speaight (1904-76) in the role of Becket. The theater manager Ashley Dukes (1885-1959), founder of the Mercury Theatre in London, took the production there in Nov. The play enjoyed enormous success and was later transferred to the Duchess Theatre and the Old Vic.

2. *Murder in the Cathedral* was broadcast by the BBC on the evening of 5 Jan 1936. TSE wrote to Henri Fluchère on 3 Aug 1938: "When the English company gave a performance here in the BBC studios, I was very well satisfied with the result, and felt that the play was in some respects more suited to radio than to the theatre."

Presidential address to Books Across the Sea

On 9 Mar 1948, TSE delivered his final address as president of Books Across the Sea (BAS) at the Extraordinary General Meeting in the South Audley Street Library, convened for the formal turning over of independent BAS to the English-Speaking Union (ESU). During the preceding year, he had been in correspondence with the New York and London branches of BAS about the proposed merger with ESU, writing to Beatrice Warde on 29 Jan 1948: "So far as I can see there is no serious disadvantage sufficient to outweigh the very positive benefits of assurance of perpetuation which accrue from the proposed scheme . . . I take it that there will be no need for a formal resignation on my part now as president, in as much as the office of president disappears. The working committee which is to be formed will presumably have a chairman who will not be myself. I should be very happy to be a member of this committee so long as it was understood that I should not be expected to attend as a matter of routine but only when there was some special item of agenda in connection with which my participation in discussion would be especially desirable." For TSE's previous presidential addresses to BAS, see 6.418, 790.

I do not want to make reference to the occasion of the foundation, or the early history of Books Across the Sea:[1] you have been told often and most of you know well the immense voluntary work that was done in those years of the war, and the great material difficulties and often personal risk. I think no-one doubts that this wartime effort to bridge the Atlantic when bridges seemed impossible has justified itself, or that the need was there and that it was the very best thing that could have been done to meet it.

In those years I do not think any of us looked very far ahead in relation to anything: we could not with B. A. S. think what was to happen after the war. I suppose if one had, one would have said there were two alternatives: one, that B. A. S. should be wound up altogether as becoming unnecessary when normal conditions returned. The other, that it would have to be transformed and run in a rather different way. I think that even its most devoted supporters would have been glad in one way to think that the needs which it served had been covered once and for all and that such efforts were no longer needed. This would however have been too optimistic. But I think it indicates that most of us have cared more about the cause which B. A. S. has aimed to serve than about the institution of B. A. S. itself.

But toward the end of the war I remember saying on a similar occasion that I foresaw that there would be as much for B. A. S. to do after the war

as there had been during it, and that it would become still more important that Anglo-American understanding should be maintained and developed in the years of peace (for we had not then acquired the new term "cold war") and that such understanding is more important and more difficult in a period without military activity than in a period when people's emotions are lively and when they are constantly reminded that young men of both countries are risking and losing their lives together.[2] At that point I only suggested that it might be important for Books Across the Sea to retain its flexibility and be able to adapt itself to new and different needs. And indeed in the organization we have had to be constantly aware, and must always in the future I think be constantly aware, of the world situation, and the position of Britain and America in relation to each other in that whole context – also of the new occasions for misunderstanding which we must remember always arise and must arise as the old ones are settled or go out of date. And also of the number of minor developments, perhaps of a more concrete kind, in communication, in travel, in the expansion or restriction of the Press on both sides: and also of the tendencies, influenced by economic changes, in the publishing business in both countries.

No-one needs to be reminded about the world situation at this moment and its relevance to our work. By Anglo-American understanding I mean something more than friendly or cordial relations between governments. One of the essentials of understanding between peoples is that free and often severe criticism can pass between them without impairing – but rather fortifying – their good relations, and that two nations can continue to trust each other, even when they disagree or even when their interests on particular matters do not coincide.

But in the world of books there are today difficulties known to every publisher on both sides which I think make our particular contribution more vital. Many of the books that are most important for our purpose are books which have in their early years at least but a small circulation in modern figures. And books which have a small circulation nowadays on the side of the Atlantic on which they originate are likely to have a still smaller circulation on the other side. It stands to reason that in the place of origin the author is known to many people personally, and it is more of a struggle to get his work introduced where he is not known. The increasing cost of production, an increase which has been more rapid and alarming in New York but is also serious here, puts a pressure on publishers to publish fewer books of the sort of which success is doubtful or of which the financial failure is probable. In

fact it is discouraging to the sort of book which a good publisher brings out for his own satisfaction because he believes it is a good book whether anybody buys it or not.

It is therefore increasingly difficult on each side to publish books originating from the other side, and therefore other kinds of circulation across the Atlantic become more important. And I think myself that it is vastly more important that the intelligent minority in both countries should be able to read the same good books than that a million people or more on each side should read the same best seller. Hence I believe that this kind of library will increase in importance. The necessary thing I think is that we should continue to review and where necessary enlarge the conception of what is an "ambassador book" according to the means at our disposal and the conditions of the times.

So far I have only repeated my statement of faith in the permanent need for Books Across the Sea. But it became increasingly obvious after the war that we could not continue in quite the same way. First there was the housing difficulty which gave your Executive anxious days and nights. Especially housing difficulty for an organization which needs to be centrally accessible and which does not command the resources to pick and choose in a situation in which too many tenants have been chasing too few houses. I think the arrangement we made with the library here in Westminster has fully proved itself, and I wish to thank those representatives of the City of Westminster and B. A. S. who have made this arrangement possible.[3] But it became obvious also that it would be impossible to carry on indefinitely simply by a few devoted workers giving a part or the whole of their time without remuneration: that what people could do in an emergency in time they could not go on doing indefinitely in an endless future. And another thing: it is very easy to make the wartime need for understanding felt and give it an appeal, and therefore relatively easy to get financial support. I began to think myself some time ago that there would be an increasing number of causes making their just claims upon the public-spirited. Again, too many causes chasing too few pounds and dollars. And amongst these causes there are so many for immediate needs of life and death, for the wretched and suffering everywhere, commending themselves to generous people with declining incomes, that I thought it would become increasingly difficult for B. A. S. as a single unit, rather specialized in the eyes of the public, to attract by itself enough financial support.[4]

I should like before I close to remind you of one principle from which Books Across the Sea has never deviated. It has been to avoid all entanglements

with official and government sponsorship. We have never wooed the Foreign Office and the State Department respectively. Nor have we even flirted seriously with the British Council or any other such necessary and excellent public institutions. I think we have never talked of "cultural relations." In fact we have set an admirable example in using the word "culture" as little as possible and instead trying to do something about it. But if Books Across the Sea on this side were a bond servant to the Foreign Office and on the other side to the State Department it is obvious that our direct personal intimate relationship (one by the way which owes so much to the going and comings of Mrs. Warde, Miss Day and Miss Bonner, and above all that invaluable two-way ambassadress Mrs. Becker) would have been poisoned at the start by official connections.[5] Our relations would have been whatever the relations between the State Department and the Foreign Office happened to be, and such official relations go up and down in temper the whole time. We should never know where we were. And it is the maintenance of this principle of independence which attracted me in the first place to Books Across the Sea.

For I am certain that a relation between countries which is a relation only between governments is a totalitarian one. Totalitarianism reduces everything to relations between governments, and relations between "peoples" in a totalitarian world is a humbug. The way to maintain democratic friendship is to multiply direct contacts between individual and individual and between group and group. For then, if one cord snaps there are innumerable other cords that hold. The more people who have personal friends in the other country, the better for the relations between the two countries; the more groups with corresponding groups and interests in common the less will temporary difficulties between governments endanger amity.

It is with this in mind that I have myself welcomed the proposed association with the E. S. U. as the best possible thing. For the E. S. U. is organized on the same principles as ourselves and it works. It is not only independent of governments but like ourselves without any central directorate. Each side of the Atlantic runs itself, but recognizes that its existence is justified only by the existence of the body on the other side. Thus the fundamental principle on which B. A. S. was initiated (and I think this principle even more important than the particular work we have set out to do) is preserved. If such a thing as Federal Union in any form is possible it will only be reached through the influence and example of such bodies which show that a common purpose, mutual understanding, and the sympathies and

friendships of individuals must be established before nations will begin to contemplate resigning any part of their sovereignties to the common interest.

NOTES

1. Books Across the Sea was a voluntary organization founded in 1941 to remedy the wartime scarcity of British books in the United States and of American books in Britain. TSE was elected president of the British Section in May 1943, succeeding Professor Arthur Newell. At the time of TSE's final address, the society in Great Britain had 300 members.

2. See 6.790-91

3. As reported in the *Times* of 14 Sept 1944, around 2,400 volumes had been received in London and 1,600 in New York (7). The London collection of books was handed over to the City of Westminster to be housed at the South Audley Street Public Library. The ceremony on 31 Jan 1946 was presided over by TSE and attended by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt (see 6.790-91).

4. TSE stated in his letter of support to Beatrice Warde, who had proposed the merger with the ESU, on 29 Jan: "I am perhaps also influenced by the thought which has been in my mind that it would probably become more difficult instead of easier to raise funds for the support of B.A.S. separately."

5. Beatrice Warde was the founder and vice president of BAS in London, Barbara Bonner the honorary secretary; Charlotte Seymour Day was executive secretary of BAS in New York. May Lamberton Becker, the mother of Beatrice Warde and literary editor of the *New York Herald Tribune*, helped organize the society and arranged for the first American books to be sent to England.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The two-page typescript, along with the minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting, is in the Houghton: bMS Am 1691 (49).

Speech at Aix-en-Provence on receiving an honorary degree

TSE delivered this speech in French in mid-Apr 1948 at the ceremony upon receiving the degree of docteur ès lettres honoris causa from the University of Aix-en-Provence. The honorary degree was arranged by his friend and translator Henri Fluchère, a professor at the university who also commissioned TSE's lecture on Edgar Poe and France for delivery to the faculties of Aix-en-Provence and Marseille during his 14-21 Apr visit (7.130). He was originally scheduled to give this speech on 6 Dec 1947, but the trip to France had to be postponed due to the general strike and stoppage of trains to Marseille. He wrote to Fluchère on 24 Oct 1947: "I will send you a copy of the Poe as soon as I have rewritten it and immediately after that will get to work on my short discourse." On 11 Nov he wrote to Fluchère seeking his help regarding the formalities and content of the speech: "I know it may be a mistake in a discourse for this purpose to attempt to incorporate any serious idea and perhaps one should restrict oneself to compliments and allusions. I want to know also whether the slight reference to Marseilles at the end is suitable or not. Finally you will have to put in the appropriate formal opening words and perhaps there is also some set formal way for the conclusion." On 10 May 1948 he described for I. A. Richards the taking of "my honorary degree this year at Aix (a ribbon tipped with rabbit's fur across the left shoulder)."

The celebrated Raymond Berenger has a reputation the more illustrious because of his having been a notable patron of poets.[1] It would seem, and this I should like to believe in so far as modesty permits, that the University of Aix, in respect of the patronage of poets, has inherited the succession of the Counts of Provence. But what is in my mind is something more than the desire to make a happy allusion. Provence was the cradle of modern European poetry: here is a country and a language to which all poets of Europe, whether the language of their verse is a Latin language or not, must acknowledge their indebtedness. It is a cause of regret to me, that I can read the poetry of Provence only in translation: the only lines that I can understand and repeat in the original tongue are those which Dante has put into the mouth of Arnaut Daniel in *Purgatory*.[2] But ignorance of the language of one's ancestors does not impair descent: and this is as true of literary as of carnal heredity. I recognise my debt to Provence and I honour her poets: and hence I feel a peculiar gratification in being granted the degree of Doctor of this University – in that I am receiving a distinction which no other university has the power to confer.

Such reflexions induce in me a mood of more than ordinary humility; and I apply to myself, in a slightly different sense from that in which Dante intended them, one line of what he says about a certain Romeo – the legendary rather than the historical Romeo, chamberlain of the same Count Raymond:

Romeo, persona umile e peregrina

though there the likeness ends. I should be happy to have been able to arrange, like Romeo, an alliance between a daughter of a Count of Provence and a King of England; but the conditions which made that marriage possible no longer exist, nor are my diplomatic talents equal to them if they did.[3] Nor do I find a precedent in the example of Thiers, who made the début of his career with a dissertation on Vauvenargues, which won him a prize from the Académie d'Aix.[4] Even before advancing years precluded the possibility, I had never the ambition to follow a political career.

It was in re-reading, for the first time in some thirty years, the causerie[5] of Ste. Beuve on Vauvenargues, that I was reminded of this episode in the life of Thiers.[6] During these years I have gained, I believe, a riper and more ample understanding of the great French moralists, including Vauvenargues, than when I first read them under the guidance of a wise, learned and enthusiastic teacher – the late Irving Babbitt, Professor of French Literature in Harvard University.[7] It is to Babbitt that I owe the beginning of my acquaintance with and admiration for French prose: I needed no master to arouse in me a passionate love of French poetry. But to return to Ste. Beuve. I found, in re-reading his essay, that I discovered a deep significance in his first sentence, which I was incapable of appreciating when I first read it. *Revenons*, he says – for in the previous week he had written of Camille Desmoulins – *revenons avec Vauvenargues à la pureté de la langue, à la sérénité des pensées et à l'intégrité morale*.[8] In thus stating the themes which he is to develop in the causerie, Ste. Beuve is saying something which seems to me most valuable for the present time.

The order in which he delivers these three assertions about Vauvenargues seems to me to deserve consideration. You can, if you will, take it as an ascending scale of value: from purity of language to serenity of thought is one step, and from serenity of thought to moral integrity is another. But there is another aspect. What is, from the aspect of eternity, an ascent from the instrumental to the end, may imply also the dependence of the higher upon the lower. It may be, that if we lose the purity of our language, our moral integrity is also imperilled.

In the world of to-day, certainly, the purity of language, the serenity of thought, and the integrity of morals are all threatened. There are not wanting many who lament the decay, and call for the restoration, of moral integrity: but are not such moralists sometimes lacking in serenity of thought, and do they not, therefore, sometimes appeal for moral integrity, not from a full appreciation of it, but rather from a panic-stricken awareness of the consequences of corruption and disorder? And there are also those who aspire to serenity of thought, but fail to achieve it because they can express themselves only in the language of the forum and the press. If moral integrity cannot be recovered without right thinking, it is also true that right thinking is impossible without a scrupulous regard for language, a reverence for the word which becomes increasingly rare.

The crisis of our time may thus be viewed in the aspect of a crisis of language. One great division between men is that between those who use words with respect for the meaning and the history of every word, and those who employ language primarily for base uses – for its immediate emotional effect either upon themselves or upon an audience which suffers passions but does not think. The pressure towards the use of language as a means of manipulating collective passion, rather than for persuading the individual reason, is strongest upon those who engage in public affairs whether in speech or in print; but it touches also those whose concern is with ideas or with literary art. So far as studies of language and literature are concerned, it is of course the function of humane scholarship in every great university to preserve, to organise, and to increase understanding of the records of the past; but the influence of such scholarship should extend far beyond the university itself, and should indirectly discipline the thinking and writing of those who have never enjoyed its direct benefits. It should be an influence in society. Vauvenargues, to whose purity of language Ste. Beuve accords such high praise, was himself a man of little scholarship, having been trained only for the career of arms suitable to a man of his class.[9] With a native sensibility, a lucid intelligence, and a taste for the society in which standards of thought and expression were recognised and their application practised, he had advantages enough. But if the benefits of scholarship do not radiate beyond the walls of universities, then good writing, in the world outside, becomes an occupation as specialised as scholarship itself – the pursuit of a small number of peculiar writers for the enjoyment of a small number of peculiar readers.

I speak, of course, having the contemporary situation of the English language primarily in mind: it is there that I have the most frequent

opportunity for detecting deterioration and abuse. But it is impossible, and not important, to point to any one place of origin for the malady of language: wherever it may begin, its contagion becomes a danger everywhere. And the number of tongues which have arrived, through a long history and the labours of many generations of writers, at such a degree of refinement that the preservation of "the purity of the language" is a matter of vital importance, are for our purposes very few: the languages of a small number of peoples concentrated on *un petit cap du continent asiatique*.[10]

The dangers to language are less like the attack of human enemies than like the invasion of some microscopic parasite which corrupts that upon which it feeds. Surely in France we may expect to find the longest resistance to such invasion; for it is in France that the purity of language has been most consciously cultivated and most jealously guarded in the past. The phrase of Paul Valéry which I have just quoted – a phrase now known the world over – inspires a word of tribute to this great poet who gave a lifetime to the study, the preservation and the renovation of language. He has bequeathed a heavy responsibility to the poets who follow him: for it is chiefly upon the poets of Europe that now devolves the duty of maintaining, in society at large, that purity of language without which our civilisation will surely decline.

A sense of the responsibility of one's profession must make one only the more acutely aware of the defectiveness of one's own achievement as a member of it. I appeal to your charity with the maxim of Vauvenargues: *on peut aimer de tout son cœur ceux en qui on reconnaît de grands défauts*.[11] I thank you for the honour you have paid to poetry in the person of a humble practitioner in an allied tongue. I am proud of my adoption – if I may term it so – by this ancient university; and in view of the accord between this institution and that of Marseilles, I shall[12] in future feel more at home in that city also. I am encouraged by this distinction, to hope that I may, in the years that remain, become more worthy of it.

NOTES

1. Raymond Berenger IV, Count of Provence (1198-1245), is described in the notes to *Paradiso* VI.127-42 as "notorious for his liberality and his patronage of poets and other men of genius" (*DC3* 74). He died in Aix-en-Provence and was buried in the Église Saint-Jean-de-Malte.

2. *Purgatorio* XXVI.140-47; one of the most cited passages in TSE's poetry and prose, ending, "'*Ara vos prec, per aquella valor / que vos guida al som de l'escalina, / sovegna vos a temps de ma dolor.*' / Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina" (*DC2* 330). See TSE's discussion and translation in

"Dante" (1929): "'And so I pray you, by that Virtue which leads you to the topmost of the stair – be mindful in due time of my pain.' Then dived he back into that fire which refines them" (3.716).

3. *Paradiso* VI.135; *read*: "Romeo persona umile e peregrina"; *trans*: "Romeo, a lowly and an alien man" (*DC3* 69). In his copy of the *Paradiso* (Houghton), TSE marked the lines (134-42) describing Romeo Villanova (1170-1250), a humble but gifted political adviser to Raymond Berenger. Romeo arranged successful royal marriages for each of Berenger's four daughters. The notes to *Paradiso* VI.127-42 state that Raymond's second daughter, Eleanor of Provence (ca. 1223-91), married King Henry III of England (1207-72) (*DC3* 74).

TSE quoted this line from *Paradiso* VI in his letter to Virginia Woolf of 7 May 1924 (*L2* 412), to Marguerite Caetani of 21 Jan 1930 (*L5* 49), and invoked it in self-description also in his "Notes for speech replying to the toast of 'The Guests'" on 23 June 1948 (7.172). It may be echoed in "the spirit unappeased and peregrine" in *Little Gidding* II (*CPP* 194 / *Poems1* 204).

4. Marie Joseph Louis Adolphe Thiers (1797-1877), French politician, historian, and president of France (1871-73), was educated first at the lycée of Marseille and then in the faculty of law at Aix-en-Provence. He obtained a prize from the Académie d'Aix for a speech on the Aix-born French moralist Vauvenargues, a friend of Voltaire.

5. Here and elsewhere on TS: "causérie"

6. In his causerie of 18 Nov 1850, "Vauvenargues," Sainte-Beuve writes: "M. Thiers a débuté par un Éloge de Vauvenargues, qui a remporté le prix à l'Académie d'Aix, et dont on ne connaît que des fragments remarquables par l'ampleur et l'intelligence." *Causeries du lundi*, vol 3 (Paris: Garnier, 1852), 99. *Trans*: Mr. Thiers has started with a eulogy to Vauvenargues, which won the prize of the Académie d'Aix and of which we only know some fragments remarkable for their scope and intelligence.

7. In 1907-08, TSE attended the course at Harvard on "French Prose and Poetry" with reference to Corneille, Racine, Molière, Victor Hugo, George Sand, Alfred de Musset, Sainte-Beuve, and Rostand. In 1909-10, he attended Babbitt's course "French Literary Criticism in France, with Special Reference to the Nineteenth Century." "Vauvenargues is very good, I think," he wrote to Herbert Read on 14 Sept 1926 (*L3* 280).

8. *Causeries du lundi*, 98. *Trans*: Let us return with Vauvenarges to the purity of language, the serenity of thought and to moral integrity.

The previous "causerie" of 11 Nov was devoted to Camille Desmoulins (1760-94), one of the most prominent journalists of the French Revolution.

9. Vauvenargues's poor health and eyesight prevented him from gaining an education. Born into a noble but impoverished family, he joined the army in his teens and saw service in the wars of the Polish and the Austrian succession, since the only career that befitted a nobleman at that time was in the army or the clergy.

10. "L'Europe deviendra-t-elle *ce qu'elle est en réalité*, c'est-à-dire: un petit cap du continent asiatique?" [Will Europe become *what it is in reality*, that is, a little promontory on the Asian continent?] asks Paul Valéry in his essay "La crise de l'esprit" (1919), included in *Variété* (Paris: Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue française, 1924, 24). TSE referred to this essay and paraphrased this sentence in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Aug 1927 (3.156).

11. *Réflexions et maximes*, 176, in *Œuvres de Vauvenargues*, ed. D.-L. Gilbert (Paris: Furne, 1857), 392. *Trans*: One can love with all one's heart those in whom one discerns some great defects.

12. TSE put two crosses in the margin and underlined these words in pencil.

During this trip to Provence, TSE also delivered his lecture "Edgar Poe et la France" in English in Aix and in Fluchère's French translation in Marseille (7.130).

TEXTUAL NOTE

The six-page typescript, with TSE's holograph emendations, is in the Hayward Bequest (H2g), King's College, together with Henri Fluchère's French translation, as delivered by TSE. On French TS: "Allocution prononcée par T. S. Eliot à l'occasion de la remise de son diplôme de Docteur Honoris Causa, à l'Université d'Aix-en-Provence, le 6 décembre 1947."

Edgar Poe et la France[1]

Maintes fois dans ma vie, mon intérêt critique est resté suspendu, pour ainsi dire, au-dessus de l'énigme de Poe. J'ai plané là comme un oiseau de proie, et j'ai toujours fini par me détourner vers un butin plus facile à capturer. Ce refus en est venu à m'apparaître comme une fuite devant un problème, problème peut-être central pour ma propre conception et mon exercice de la poésie. En prenant enfin la résolution de me risquer à un jugement, de faire, pour le moins, une tentative préliminaire pour essayer de situer Poe dans ma propre *poétique*, je pense qu'il est approprié et, j'espère, de bon augure, que mes premières réflexions sur ce sujet soient adressées à un public français, et soient articulées en Provence. Car il est impossible de se faire une opinion critique de Poe sans prendre en considération l'œuvre et les opinions de trois grands poètes qui représentent les trois générations littéraires qui nous séparent de Poe : à savoir, Baudelaire, Mallarmé et Paul Valéry, qui repose dans ce cimetière méditerranéen, déjà de toute éternité associé à son nom.[2] Si je me trouve forcé d'examiner avec sérieux l'art poétique de Poe, c'est en raison de mon admiration et de ma dette envers l'œuvre de ces trois grands hommes. Et je ne regrette pas de m'être, jusqu'à présent, abstenu de faire une étude quelque peu soutenue de Poe. Jusqu'à ce que l'œuvre de Valéry fût terminée, le moment n'était pas mûr. Car il faut étudier Poe en fonction des contextes qu'il a suscités ; et le plus important, je crois, est celui de son influence sur Baudelaire, sur Mallarmé, et sur Valéry. Aujourd'hui seulement sa place devient évidente au sein d'une certaine tradition poétique, dans le développement d'une courbe qui fut, j'en suis sûr, la courbe poétique la plus significative depuis un siècle. Et ce développement, il est possible qu'il ait porté tous ses fruits, et soit maintenant arrivé à son terme.

Je ne suis pas dupe de l'idée que le problème auquel je m'attaque aujourd'hui puisse être résolu par un seul critique, quel qu'il soit. Certainement pas par moi-même. Ce qu'il faudrait, je crois, c'est une espèce d'examen collectif, à la fois par des critiques français, anglais et américains, pour résoudre les contradictions que l'on remarque entre la réputation de Poe et l'influence qu'il a exercée dans ces trois pays. Je suis un poète anglais d'origine américaine, et l'influence de Baudelaire et des poètes qui en dérivent a été dominante dans ma formation. Ces titres suffisent, je pense, à justifier les efforts

que je fais pour prendre part à cette exploration, bien qu'ils ne soient certainement pas suffisants pour assurer mon succès. Comme je viens de le dire, un problème de cette nature est de ceux sur lesquels des esprits différents, français, anglais, américains, devraient faire converger leurs efforts : je me déclarerais satisfait si je pouvais seulement encourager quelques autres critiques à entreprendre la même tâche.

Aucune réputation poétique, naturellement, n'est jamais établie pour toujours ; le plus qu'une critique judicieuse puisse faire, c'est de limiter l'espace au sein duquel une réputation particulière continuera à fluctuer. Et il nous faut, au départ, tenir pour négligeable un résidu de différence insoluble entre l'appréciation que portent sur un poète ses propres compatriotes, et celle des critiques étrangers les plus hautement qualifiés. Nous tous, quelle que soit notre nationalité et notre langue, aimons à croire que nous comprenons nos poètes bien mieux qu'aucun étranger ne peut les comprendre. Ce qui n'est pas nécessairement vrai : et je fais état de ce préjugé afin que vous ne puissiez pas supposer que j'ai l'intention de blâmer l'opinion, et de renverser les jugements de Baudelaire, de Mallarmé et de Paul Valéry. Si j'avais l'arrogance de le croire, je ne penserais pas qu'il vaille la peine que je parle de Poe et de la France. Ma réaction à l'égard de Poe est en partie celle de ces poètes, en partie celle d'un Anglais et en partie celle d'un Américain ; et c'est au premier chef pour mon soulagement personnel que je désire arriver à voir, non pas trois images, mais une seule image de Poe, dans laquelle ces trois aspects puissent se réconcilier. Je pense qu'un critique anglais ou américain peut déceler des défauts et des limites dans l'œuvre de Poe dont ces trois poètes français n'eurent pas conscience, ou qui ne les intéressaient pas. Mais, d'autre part, à force de méditer sur ce que Baudelaire, Mallarmé et Valéry ont dit au sujet de Poe, j'en suis arrivé à la conclusion qu'il y a des aspects de Poe que les critiques anglais et américains n'ont pas vus.

En Angleterre et en Amérique, je crois qu'il est juste de dire que Poe, dans l'ensemble, a été considéré comme un épigone mineur du mouvement romantique, comme un disciple de Byron et de Shelley en poésie, et, dans ses œuvres d'imagination, un successeur des romanciers « Gothiques ». Aucun poète américain ou anglais de quelque distinction n'a désigné Poe comme son maître, et même il est peu d'influence indirecte dont on puisse faire état. On peut peut-être trouver quelque influence, par-ci par-là, dans la poésie de Kipling, mais le seul poète de langue anglaise qui semble avoir trouvé une inspiration capitale dans les vers de Poe, c'est Edward Lear, dont les poèmes furent surtout écrits pour amuser les enfants. En Amérique, nous pouvons

comprendre sans difficulté la popularité exclusive de Whitman, avec son inspiration patriotique, l'appel local des sujets qu'il traite, son exaltation conjointe de l'individu et de la masse, et sa versification apparemment révolutionnaire ; pourtant, il est curieux de constater que la génération actuelle des critiques et des érudits américains, qui ont consacré une attention si exhaustive aux hommes de lettres américains, ait laissé Poe dans un oubli relatif. Je soupçonne que l'opinion d'un Américain de culture moyenne est que Poe est l'auteur d'un très petit nombre de poèmes lyriques qui enchantent le très jeune lecteur, et qui hantent la mémoire de tous – mais tout enthousiasme pour ces poèmes est un enthousiasme du souvenir, qui vous reste des années d'adolescence, lorsque le goût de la poésie vient à peine de naître et ne comporte aucune réserve critique. Ses contes sont également lus, – ou, du moins, on les lisait de mon temps –, par tout enfant élevé dans un milieu cultivé ; mais le lecteur parvenu à maturité y retourne rarement. Dans les œuvres d'imagination, il n'est pas douteux que son influence en Angleterre et en Amérique ait été immense ; mais elle s'est surtout exercée sur ces types de romans populaires que le critique littéraire ne prend pas au sérieux. Dans le roman policier, Poe est le précurseur de Conan Doyle, qui a créé Sherlock Holmes en partie d'après le Monsieur Dupin de Poe : en vérité, on peut dire que Poe en Amérique, et Wilkie Collins en Angleterre, furent les créateurs du roman policier, et que tout ouvrage de ce genre écrit depuis contient quelque chose de l'un, ou quelque chose de l'autre, ou quelque chose des deux.[3] Il paraît probable aussi que Poe a influencé le roman d'invention scientifique tel que Wells l'a exploité, et le roman d'aventures aux invraisemblances folles, cultivé par Rider Haggard. Mais les lecteurs de ce genre d'ouvrages d'imagination ont, pour la plupart, un goût limité à ce que produit leur époque, et, tandis que tout le monde admettra que Poe fut l'inventeur de plusieurs de ces genres, peu nombreux sont ceux qui, dans leur âge avancé, reviennent rafraîchir leur souvenir des contes qui les ont fait vibrer à l'âge de douze ou quatorze ans.

L'influence de Poe est aussi visible sur les œuvres d'imagination françaises d'espèce semblable, mais point n'est besoin de nous en occuper ici. Ce qui me frappe dès l'abord, comme étant une différence significative entre l'opinion française sérieuse d'une part, et l'opinion anglaise et américaine sérieuses d'autre part, c'est la différence dans la façon dont on saisit l'œuvre de Poe. Pour les trois poètes français dont les noms reviendront constamment dans cette discussion, Poe est un écrivain qui s'exprime indiscutablement dans une grande variété de formes ; écrivain dont l'œuvre, on peut l'admettre, est

fragmentaire et occasionnelle, comme sa pauvreté, ses faiblesses, ses vicissitudes le lui ont imposé, mais écrivain néanmoins dont l'œuvre doit être saisie *comme un tout*. Ils l'ont considéré comme une intelligence cohérente et puissante, possédant presque la curiosité d'un Léonard de Vinci, ce qui l'a conduit à suivre des sentiers variés ; mais néanmoins comme un auteur dont l'œuvre entière doit être étudiée si l'on veut en comprendre quelque partie. En Angleterre et en Amérique, où les critiques sont, à mon avis, plus enclins à porter des jugements isolés sur les différentes parties d'une œuvre, Poe est plus souvent considéré comme un écrivain qui s'est amusé à écrire de la poésie et différentes espèces de prose, sans se décider à parfaire son travail dans aucun de ces genres. Dans son cas, une telle attitude est encore renforcée par l'évidence des défauts de son style. Examinons donc d'abord quelques-uns des défauts et des limites de Poe, tels qu'ils frappent le lecteur de langue anglaise.

Poe eut, à un degré exceptionnel, le sens de l'élément incantatoire en poésie, de ce que l'on peut appeler, au sens le plus littéral du terme, la magie du vers. Sa versification n'est pas, comme celle de Shakespeare ou de Milton, ou celle de La Fontaine ou de Racine, ou en vérité celle de poètes bien moins grands que ceux-là, de l'espèce qui offre une mélodie plus riche, fruit de l'étude et d'un long commerce, à la perception plus avertie du lecteur qui revient à lui après l'écoulement des années. L'effet qu'elle produit est immédiat, mais frappé de stagnation ; il est probablement le même pour la sensibilité de l'écolier que pour l'esprit mûri ou l'oreille cultivée. En vérité, dans sa perfection immuable, elle ressemble davantage à de très bons *vers*, dans un des sens anglais du mot, qu'à de la *poésie*. Toutefois, elle produit une incantation, qui, à cause de son caractère brut lui-même, met l'émotion en branle à un niveau profond, et presque primitif. Or, dans le choix qu'il fait du mot qui possède le *son* juste, Poe n'a pas toujours le scrupule que le mot ait aussi le *sens* juste. Je donnerai un exemple dans lequel nous pourrons comparer l'usage du même mot par Poe et par Tennyson, lequel, de tous les poètes anglais depuis Milton, a eu le sens le plus exact et le plus raffiné de la sonorité des mots. Dans le poème de Poe qui s'intitule *Ulalume* – à mon sens un de ses poèmes les mieux réussis, aussi bien que les plus typiques –, nous trouvons le vers :

It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year.
C'était la nuit dans l'Octobre solitaire
De mon année la plus immémoriale.[4]

Immemorial, suivant le dictionnaire d'Oxford, signifie « ce qui se trouve au delà de la mémoire ou de l'esprit, si ancien qu'il n'en reste aucune trace, extrêmement vieux ». Aucun de ces sens ne paraît applicable à l'usage que Poe fait ici du mot. L'année n'était pas au delà de la mémoire, parce que le poète se rappelle, ou feint de se rappeler, très bien un de ses épisodes ; il rappelle aussi, à la fin du poème, ce qui s'était passé exactement une année auparavant.[5]

Il y a un vers de Tennyson également bien connu, et admiré à juste titre, parce que la sonorité du vers est un écho si parfait du sens qu'il mentionne :

The moan of doves in immemorial elms
L'appel douloureux des colombes dans les ormes immémoriaux.[6]

Ici, *immemorial*, outre qu'il a une valeur mélodique des plus heureuses, est exactement le terme qu'il faut pour évoquer des arbres si vieux que personne ne sait exactement quel âge ils ont.

On peut dire que la poésie de différentes espèces va de celle dans laquelle l'attention du lecteur est au premier chef dirigée vers le son, à celle dans laquelle elle est au premier chef dirigée vers le sens. Dans la première espèce, on peut saisir le sens d'une façon presque inconsciente ; tandis qu'avec l'autre, c'est le son qui opère sur nous, sans que nous nous en rendions compte. Mais dans l'une ou l'autre de ces espèces, il faut que le son et le sens coopèrent, et même dans le poème le plus incantatoire le sens littéral d'aucun mot ne peut être complètement négligé.

Il n'est pas rare de constater chez Poe comme une irresponsabilité à l'égard du sens des mots. *Le Corbeau* est, je pense, très loin d'être le meilleur poème de Poe : bien que, à cause de l'analyse de sa composition que l'auteur nous donne, dans l'essai traduit sous le titre de : *La Genèse d'un poème*, ce soit le plus célèbre.

In there stepped a stately Raven
Of the saintly days of yore.
Alors entra, majestueux, un Corbeau
Des saints jours de jadis.[7]

Puisqu'il n'y à rien qui évoque particulièrement la sainteté chez ce corbeau, à supposer, en vérité, que cet oiseau de mauvais augure ne soit pas exactement le contraire, inutile de rapporter son origine à une période de sainteté, même si on peut prétendre qu'une période de cette nature ait existé. À peine venons-nous d'entendre le corbeau appelé « majestueux » que nous

apprenons un peu plus loin qu'il est « disgracieux », attribut difficilement conciliable avec la majesté.[8] Plusieurs mots dans le poème semblent être introduits uniquement pour donner au vers la mesure requise, ou par souci de la rime. L'oiseau est désigné comme n'étant pas *craven* simplement parce que *craven* rime avec *raven* ; abdication devant la nécessité de la rime que Malherbe, je crois, aurait difficilement tolérée.[9] Il n'y a même pas toujours une justification de cet ordre : dire que la lumière de la lampe *gloated* sur les coussins du sofa, est, en vérité, une bizarrerie qui, même si elle était à sa place, paraîtrait forcée.[10]

Des imperfections de ce genre peuvent servir à expliquer pourquoi *La Philosophie de la Composition – La Genèse d'un Poème* – (essai dans lequel Poe fait profession de révéler sa technique, pour la composition du *Corbeau*) n'a pas été pris au sérieux en Angleterre ni en Amérique. Il est difficile de lire cet essai sans songer que si Poe a ourdi son poème de façon si délibérée, il aurait pu se donner un peu plus de peine pour l'écrire : le résultat fait à peine honneur à la méthode. Par conséquent, un lecteur anglais ou américain tirera vraisemblablement la conclusion que Poe, à analyser son poème, ne révèle rien d'autre que la façon dont il voulait penser, ou dont il voulait que le lecteur pensât, qu'il l'avait écrit. En sorte que l'essai lui-même n'a pas été, j'en suis sûr, pris aussi au sérieux qu'il le mérite.

Nul poète, quand il écrit son *Art Poétique*, ne peut faire autre chose qu'expliquer, rationaliser, défendre, sa technique personnelle, ou lui préparer la voie. Il se peut qu'il pense établir des lois pour toute la poésie, mais ce qu'il a de valable à dire est presque entièrement au sujet de la façon dont il écrit lui-même, ou dont il aspire à écrire. Nous pouvons apprendre de lui des principes applicables à la composition d'autres espèces de poésie ; mais nous ne pourrons le faire impunément sans nous rappeler les limites de son type personnel de poésie. Poe, par exemple, a écrit un passage remarquable sur l'impossibilité du long poème, qu'il tient, au mieux, pour une simple série de courts poèmes, enchaînés les uns aux autres.[11] Il n'aurait pas pu, je crois, écrire ces pages, n'était le fait qu'il était lui-même incapable d'écrire un long poème. Il ne pouvait concevoir un poème que comme comportant un seul effet simple ; pour lui, la cohésion d'un poème devait se trouver dans un état d'âme soutenu.[12] Pourtant, ce n'est habituellement que dans un poème de quelque longueur qu'on peut exprimer une suite variée d'états d'âme ; car la variété des états d'âme requiert un certain nombre de thèmes ou de sujets différents, reliés soit en eux-mêmes, soit dans l'esprit du poète. Ces parties peuvent constituer un tout qui est *plus* que la somme des parties : un tout

tel que le plaisir que nous retirons à la lecture d'une des parties est rehaussé par notre compréhension du tout. Il s'ensuit que, dans un long poème, certains passages peuvent être délibérément composés d'une façon moins « poétique » que d'autres : ces passages peuvent ne briller d'aucun éclat lorsqu'on les isole, mais peuvent avoir été écrits avec l'intention de montrer par contraste la beauté d'autres passages, et de les unir en un tout beaucoup plus beau qu'une des parties séparées. Un long poème peut gagner à avoir le plus grand nombre possible de variations d'intensité. Poe voulait qu'un poème fût de la plus grande intensité d'un bout à l'autre ; il est douteux qu'il ait pu apprécier les passages plus philosophiques du *Purgatoire* de Dante.[13] Néanmoins, pour certains poètes, ou pour quelques poètes à certaines périodes, le long poème est vraiment *impossible* – quoique il doive être possible pour des lecteurs à n'importe quelle époque de continuer à goûter les longs poèmes importants déjà écrits ; et ce que Poe a à nous dire sur ce sujet n'est pas seulement d'un grand intérêt, mais d'une grande valeur, car cela nous aide à apprécier l'œuvre des poètes pour qui le long poème est impossible.

Le fait que, pour Poe, un poème ait à être l'expression d'un état d'âme unique peut être mieux compris si on le considère comme une manifestation d'une faiblesse plus fondamentale : j'avance ce que j'ai à dire ici avec une très grande prudence ; mais je pense qu'on peut y trouver quelque explication du mécontentement ressenti par tant de lecteurs. Cela peut aussi nous aider à expliquer pourquoi l'œuvre de Poe a été pour beaucoup de lecteurs la passion d'une phase évolutive, de cette période de la vie où ils sortent à peine de l'enfance. Que Poe ait eu une puissante intelligence, voilà qui est indéniable ; mais il me semble qu'elle n'est rien d'autre que l'intelligence d'un adolescent hautement doué, avant la période de la puberté. Les formes que prend sa curiosité turbulente sont celles où se délecte la mentalité du préadolescent : merveilles de la nature et de la mécanique et du surnaturel, cryptogrammes et chiffres, énigmes et labyrinthes, joueurs d'échecs mécaniques, et folles envolées de la spéculation. La variété et l'ardeur de sa curiosité enchantent et éblouissent ; et pourtant la bizarrerie et le manque de cohérence de ses sujets d'intérêt finit par lasser. Il lui manque précisément ce qui donne de la dignité à la pensée d'un esprit mûri : une attitude cohérente envers la vie. Une attitude peut être empreinte de maturité et de cohérence, et rester cependant hautement sceptique : mais Poe n'était pas sceptique. Il semble, au contraire, s'abandonner complètement à l'idée du moment ; le résultat est que toutes ses idées paraissent être sujets de divertissement plutôt que de foi. Ce qui fait défaut ce n'est pas la puissance

intellectuelle, mais cette maturité de l'intelligence qui est inséparable de l'épanouissement de l'homme en un tout, et du développement de sa sensibilité tout au long du souvenir d'une longue série d'émotions. Je laisse de côté toute explication psychologique ou pathologique possible. Il me suffit, pour mon présent dessein, de rappeler que l'œuvre de Poe est celle que je m'attends à trouver de la part d'un homme d'une intelligence et d'une sensibilité très exceptionnelles, dont le développement émotionnel s'est, à quelque égard, arrêté à un stade encore précoce.

Et pourtant, les hommes de génie sur lesquels Poe a produit la plus profonde impression n'ont pas été du tout de ce type que je viens d'indiquer. Je suis frappé, cependant, par la phrase qui ouvre l'essai de Paul Valéry *Au Sujet d'Euréka*, dans le premier volume de *Variété*. « J'avais vingt ans, dit-il, et je croyais à la puissance de la pensée. »[14] Vient ensuite une série de réflexions brillantes, et une élucidation du sens du mot *cosmogonie*. L'essai est de valeur, à cause de l'explication de lui-même que Valéry nous donne en écrivant sur *Euréka*. Il nous convainc, non pas tellement de la valeur positive de la spéculation de Poe, que de l'effet stimulant qu'il a eu sur Valéry au temps de l'adolescence, et de son importance pour Valéry comme point de départ. Et il nous donne la clé d'une attitude différente envers *Euréka* : différente de celle qu'un philosophe anglais ou américain adopterait vraisemblablement. Ces derniers verraient sans doute dans *Euréka* l'effusion ingénieuse d'un écrivain plein de facilité, ayant des notions superficielles de physique et d'astro-physique, mais ignorant la métaphysique et la théologie, ignorant les constructions des néo-platoniciens et la critique qu'en font les Pères de l'Église. Pour Valéry, *Euréka* est un poème abstrait : Baudelaire a dit à peu près la même chose, et c'est une vue parfaitement soutenable d'*Euréka*.[15] Je pense à une phrase révélatrice dans *Variété* : « Quant à moi, qui suis, je l'avoue, beaucoup plus attentif à la formation ou à la fabrication des œuvres qu'aux œuvres mêmes . . . » Et à une remarque un peu plus loin dans le même volume : « À mon avis, la plus authentique philosophie n'est pas dans les objets de notre réflexion, tant que dans l'acte même de la pensée et dans sa manœuvre. »[16] Ce que Poe pouvait écrire à cause d'une limitation particulière de son esprit, Valéry pouvait continuer à l'admirer à cause d'une absence encore plus particulière de limitation, à cause de sa capacité d'admirer une construction intellectuelle d'un point de vue esthétique, sans en être distrait par la considération de sa correspondance avec le réel.

Jusqu'ici, j'ai volontairement insisté sur ces taches et ces faiblesses dans l'œuvre de Poe qui ont amoindri sa réputation dans les pays de langue anglaise.

D'après ces considérations, il serait trop facile pour le critique anglais ou américain de conclure tout de suite que Baudelaire, Mallarmé et Valéry ont surestimé Poe simplement parce qu'ils ne le comprenaient pas, simplement parce qu'ils ne connaissaient pas assez bien la langue anglaise. J'ai déjà donné à entendre que je me refuse à accepter cette conclusion. La possibilité qu'un écrivain doué d'imagination puisse se tromper avec bonheur en lisant les œuvres d'un autre poète écrivant dans une langue dont il n'a pas acquis la maîtrise, n'est pas de celles que l'on doive entièrement rejeter. Il est certainement possible, lorsqu'il lit quelque chose dans une langue étrangère, imparfaitement comprise, que le lecteur trouve ce qu'il n'y a pas ; et lorsque le lecteur est lui-même un homme de génie, le poème étranger qu'il lit peut, par quelque accident heureux, tirer quelque chose d'important des profondeurs de son esprit, qu'il attribuera à ce qu'il vient de lire. Nous devons aussi reconnaître qu'en traduisant Poe en français, Baudelaire et Mallarmé l'ont amélioré de façon frappante. Le premier, en traduisant la prose, et le second, dans sa traduction de quelques-uns des poèmes, ont changé un anglais qui est trop souvent négligé et de pacotille, trop souvent avili par des ornements clinquants, en un français d'une grande distinction de style.[17] D'autre part, les défauts dont j'ai donné des exemples, et quelques autres que je n'ai pas illustrés, ne sont pas de nature à nous permettre de ranger Poe au second rang ; au contraire, ils donnent simplement naissance à l'énigme de l'importance de Poe. Je pense que le critique le moins favorable doit admettre que tout ce que Poe a écrit, même ses morceaux de prose les plus banaux, porte la marque d'un génie hautement original et d'une personnalité positive et unique ; et que certains des poèmes et des contes, une fois lus, ont laissé une impression ineffaçable sur d'innombrables lecteurs. Il est, par conséquent, justifié de nous demander si Baudelaire, Mallarmé et Valéry ne peuvent pas nous donner quelque explication, s'ils n'ont pas chacun quelque affinité avec Poe dont l'identification nous permettra de mettre au clair notre compréhension et de rehausser le prix que nous attachons à son œuvre.

Il nous faut, naturellement, nous défendre contre la tentation d'affirmer que Baudelaire, Mallarmé et Valéry ont tous réagi devant Poe exactement de la même façon, ou que son œuvre a servi un but identique pour chacun d'entre eux. Ces poètes, parce qu'ils sont de grands poètes, sont très différents l'un de l'autre. Et la période qui va de la publication des *Fleurs du Mal* à celle des derniers poèmes de Paul Valéry s'étend sur la plus grande partie d'un siècle entier, siècle de développement et de changement rapides.[18] S'il nous faut découvrir les identités, nous devons aussi faire état des différences. Nous

devons nous attendre que Baudelaire, qui a découvert Poe, ait eu des raisons plus mêlées pour l'admirer ; et que Valéry, le dernier des trois, admire Poe avec plus de précision et une conscience plus claire. Et c'est bien, je crois, ce que nous trouvons en partie. Nous devons admettre le fait que Baudelaire, dans son introduction à ses traductions, présentait son auteur à un public nouveau qui par conséquent s'intéressait grandement à ce qu'était Poe, l'homme – ou plutôt au type de poète auquel Baudelaire assimilait Poe. Le portrait de Poe est assez haut en couleur et beaucoup plus au goût de l'époque de Baudelaire qu'à celui de la nôtre :

> Il y a, dans l'histoire littéraire, des destinées analogues, de vraies damnations, – des hommes qui portent le mot *guignon* écrit en caractères mystérieux dans les plis sinueux de leur front.[19]

Ce que Baudelaire nous donne n'est pas un portrait de Poe entièrement satisfaisant, mais le prototype du *poète maudit*.[20] L'histoire de ce type, avec ses origines byroniennes, au sens de la damnation infligée par le Calvinisme écossais, et sa métamorphose graduelle en quelque chose d'aussi éloigné de Byron – le poète devenu l'adorateur et la victime de la beauté et de la perfection est en soi un chapitre intéressant de l'histoire de l'esthétique et de l'histoire des conditions sociales de l'art. Il me suffit, pour mon présent dessein, de faire remarquer que Baudelaire fut attiré par la personnalité et par la vie de Poe, considérées par lui comme un paradigme de la conception qu'il avait de lui-même et de son propre rôle. Mais, au cours de ce qu'il propose surtout comme une étude de Poe, l'homme, et de son histoire, Baudelaire laisse échapper une remarque de profonde importance. Parlant de l'essai de Poe, *Le Principe de la Poésie*, il remarque :

> Il croyait, en vrai poëte qu'il était, que le but de la poésie est de même nature que son principe, et qu'elle ne doit pas avoir en vue autre chose qu'elle-même.[21]

Là, se trouve le germe de l'esthétique d'un siècle entier. Mais l'intérêt porté à Poe, l'homme, au poète plutôt qu'à la poésie, à l'écrivain des nerfs, au poète de l'hystérie et de l'hallucination, voilà qui est singulièrement du Baudelaire.[22]

Pour Mallarmé, il y a plutôt l'intérêt plus minutieux porté à la technique du vers. Dans la massive et définitive vie de Mallarmé par le Dr Mondor, je trouve citée l'intéressante note suivante de Mallarmé sur le poème de Poe intitulé *Les Cloches* :

> Le poète, dans le groupe de morceaux qui compose ce poème célèbre, a usé librement d'un procédé que récuse la poésie française, c'est la répétition consécutive d'un ou de plusieurs mots dans un ou plusieurs vers. La traduction devait reproduire cette intention, voisine d'une curieuse manie, quand, toutefois, il ne résultait rien de contraire à notre euphonie, et qu'il n'y avait pas à essuyer (soit pour : *en même temps*) une lourdeur ou (soit pour : *cloches*) une brisure défectueuse.[23]

Mais quand nous en arrivons à Valéry, il apparaît que ce n'est ni l'homme ni le vers, mais la théorie de la poésie qui devient le foyer de son attention. Dans une lettre très ancienne à Mallarmé, Valéry écrivait : « Je chéris [. . .] les théories si profondes et si perfidement savantes d'Edgar Poe, je crois à la toute-puissance du rythme et surtout de l'épithète suggestive. »[24]

Mais je risque cette opinion en m'appuyant moins sur les déclarations explicites de Valéry au sujet de Poe que sur mes lectures de la poésie et de la théorie de Valéry. De même que la poésie de Valéry et ses essais sur l'art de la poésie représentent deux aspects d'un même voyage mental de découverte, et se complètent mutuellement pour constituer une œuvre, de même, pour Valéry, la poésie de Poe est inséparable de sa critique. Et, en vérité, l'originalité purement technique de Poe, qui dépend du vers, du rythme, de la rime, et de procédés verbaux qui ne sont possibles que dans la langue anglaise, n'a pas grand-chose à offrir directement à un poète qui travaille dans une langue différente.

Arrivé à ce point, je me sens forcé d'aventurer quelques observations personnelles sur le vocable « poésie pure » : ou, peut-être, se peut-il que ce que j'ai à offrir soit plutôt ma définition de ce que ce terme signifie pour moi.

Je crois que toute poésie trouve son point de départ dans les émotions ressenties par les êtres humains dans leurs rapports avec eux-mêmes, avec les autres et avec le monde qui les entoure. Elle a par conséquent à faire aussi avec la pensée et l'action, d'où naissent les émotions et auxquelles les émotions donnent naissance. Mais si primitif que soit le stade d'expression et d'appréciation, la fonction de la poésie ne peut jamais être simplement de faire naître un écho ou une similitude des ces émotions dans le public du poète. Peut-être vous rappelez-vous l'histoire mythique du festin d'Alexandre, familière aux lecteurs anglais à cause d'une ode célèbre de Dryden. Si le conquérant de l'Asie fut réellement transporté par les émotions violentes que le barde Thimothée, grâce aux habiles modulations de sa mélodie, est supposé avoir éveillées en lui, alors le grand Alexandre souffrait simplement

d'un automatisme créé par l'alcool, et se trouvait dans un état qui le rendait complètement incapable d'apprécier l'art poétique ou l'art musical.[25] Dans la poésie primitive, ou dans la jouissance la plus rudimentaire que la poésie peut donner, l'attention de l'auditeur est orientée vers le sujet ; l'effet de l'art du poète est ressenti sans que l'auditeur en prenne conscience. Une telle situation n'a pas besoin, pour servir mon raisonnement, d'avoir jamais été réelle, mais on peut la considérer comme un simple point de départ hypothétique de la poésie. Car, même dans le plaisir le plus naïf que l'on prend à une récitation poétique, il peut toujours y avoir un plaisir conscient de la façon dont on raconte une histoire, aussi bien qu'un intérêt à apprendre les événements dont le poète fait le récit. Mais lorsque la conscience du langage s'accroît, il y a certainement un stade auquel l'auditeur, qui peut à ce moment-là être devenu le *lecteur*, est conscient d'un double intérêt : d'un intérêt dans l'histoire pour l'histoire, et d'un plaisir conscient éprouvé à la façon dont elle est racontée ; c'est-à-dire, plaisir du style. C'est le stade de Virgile.[26†] Nous arrivons ainsi au point auquel peut naître une délectation à discriminer entre les façons dont des poètes différents traiteront le même sujet ; appréciation non pas purement du meilleur ou du pire, mais des différences entre des styles que l'on admire également. Au troisième stade du développement de la conscience du langage, le sujet peut reculer à l'arrière-plan au lieu d'être le but du poème ; il devient simplement un moyen nécessaire de la réalisation du poème. À ce stade, le lecteur ou l'auditeur peuvent devenir presque aussi inconscients du sujet que l'auditeur primitif l'était du style ; quoique, comme je l'ai donné à entendre, il est possible qu'on ne se trouve jamais réellement en face d'une inconscience et d'une indifférence complète au style à l'origine, ou au sujet à la fin. Car une complète inconscience du style peut signifier que la poésie n'a pas encore fait son apparition ; une complète indifférence au sujet peut signifier que la poésie est arrivée à sa fin.

Ce serait une erreur de présumer que ce développement de la conscience du langage, qui signifie que la poésie à chaque stade offre de nouveaux problèmes au poète, implique un progrès vers une poésie *meilleure*. Nous ne soulevons pas la question. Savoir si c'est une bonne chose pour l'humanité de sentir s'accroître la conscience de soi est une question – différente et bien plus vaste qu'aucun problème littéraire – dont je n'ai pas à m'occuper ici. Je dis seulement que le poète important est celui qui reconnaît et qui résout avec bonheur le problème de l'expression au stade de la conscience de soi, dans le déroulement historique où il se situe ainsi que le public contemporain.

Or, ce processus d'accroissement de la conscience de soi – ou, en d'autres termes, d'accroissement de la conscience du langage – a comme but théorique ce que je crois pouvoir appeler la *poésie pure*. Je crois que c'est un but que la poésie ne pourra jamais atteindre, parce que l'atteindre signifierait la fin de toute poésie. La poésie ne peut être écrite qu'aussi longtemps qu'elle conserve quelque impureté. L'abbé Bremond, si je l'ai bien compris, soutient que, tandis que l'élément de *poésie pure* est nécessaire pour qu'un poème soit un poème, aucun poème ne saurait consister uniquement de *poésie pure*.[27] Ce qui arrive, et ce qui est arrivé, dans ce que je considère comme le courant central de la poésie au cours des cent dernières années, est un changement d'attitude envers le sujet. Et quand nous disons que le sujet est devenu moins important, nous devons nous garder d'un malentendu. Il faut, je pense, que le sujet demeure important, mais son importance dans la poésie moderne a changé en espèce. Le sujet est important en tant que *moyen* ; la *fin* est le poème. Au lieu que le poème soit écrit *autour* d'un sujet, nous constatons que le sujet est à *l'intérieur* du poème. Un poème peut en fait contenir plusieurs sujets dont chacun pourrait être exprimé en termes différents, et il se peut cependant que demander quel est le sujet du poème soit une question dépourvue de sens. Car la tâche du poète peut avoir été d'harmoniser plusieurs sujets n'ayant entre eux aucun rapport qu'on puisse formuler en termes intellectuels ; et de leur union voici que surgit, non pas un autre « sujet », mais le poème.

Arrivé à ce point, j'aimerais répéter que le problème ne se présente jamais comme étant celui d'écrire une poésie meilleure que celle déjà écrite. Le fait est simplement que notre succès en tant que poètes dépend de la conscience que nous avons de la tâche que notre position particulière dans le temps et dans l'histoire de notre langue nous impose. Mais, en tant que lecteurs, nous n'aimerions pas être réduits à apprécier uniquement l'espèce de poésie qui correspond à notre conscience contemporaine. En ce qui me concerne, et je soupçonne qu'il en est ainsi chez beaucoup d'autres, je peux éprouver du soulagement, après un commerce assidu avec la poésie d'un Mallarmé, à revenir aux pages d'un Victor Hugo.

Je puis maintenant retourner à Poe. Je pense que nous trouvons dans sa poésie ce changement de rapports entre le sujet et le poème dont je viens de parler. Je pense qu'une certaine « pureté » est venue facilement à Poe ; je ne veux pas dire ici pureté de diction, au sens ordinaire du mot, car j'ai déjà fait observer sa négligence répréhensible dans l'usage des mots. Je veux dire que, dans la poésie de Poe, le sujet disparaît à mesure qu'il le traite. Même dans

les deux ou trois poèmes, comme *Le Palais Hanté*, où le sujet est la ruine de soi par l'alcool, la différence qu'il fait entre l'usage de son expérience personnelle, et celui, disons, d'un François Villon, est des plus frappantes.[28] Et quand je dis que la pureté venait aisément à Poe, je pense à l'explication de Poe que j'ai déjà mise en avant : cet arrêt de développement à l'âge de la puberté. Ses prises de conscience les plus aiguës sont celles du rêve. Il est significatif que les dames de ses poèmes et de ses contes soient toujours des dames perdues ou évanouies avant qu'on ait pu les étreindre. Le sujet est, dans sa nature même, ténu. Il s'ensuit que son œuvre est de moindre importance que celle des poètes avec lesquels nous l'avons mesuré. Car il nous faut juger la poésie de ce point de vue de la pureté, en rapport avec l'œuvre de *purification des matériaux* qui y sont entrés. Plus de substance, et bien plus importante, a été transmutée par ces poètes qui l'ont suivi, et c'est à cet égard que *la substance* de la poésie garde toujours une importance capitale.

Il m'est loisible, maintenant, d'arriver à mon dernier point : celui du développement de l'activité critique dans la composition de la poésie. Il y a, en anglais, un prédécesseur de Poe, et plus grand que Poe. Le premier grand exemple de la conscience critique dans la poésie anglaise, c'est Samuel Coleridge. Il est vrai que toujours, depuis Horace, les poètes ont écrit sur l'art de la poésie ; mais l'introspection moderne dans le processus poétique peut presque partir de Coleridge.[29] Dans son essai critique, *Biographia Literaria*, le sujet de Coleridge était sans doute surtout un examen, non pas de sa poésie, mais de celle de Wordsworth ; et pourtant il anticipe la question qui a fasciné le poète moderne : « Qu'est-ce que je fais quand j'écris un poème ? » Mais le court essai de Poe, *Philosophie de la Composition*, est une *mise au point* de cette question qui marque une date.

L'interpénétration de l'activité poétique et critique, qui est la conséquence logique de la conscience croissante du langage, est portée à son point le plus avancé par Paul Valéry. À ce point, le foyer de notre attention tend à se déplacer du poème vers le processus de composition du poème. M. Louis Bolle, dans son admirable *Paul Valéry*, remarque avec pertinence : « Ce narcissisme intellectuel n'est pas étranger au poète quoiqu'il n'explique pas toute son œuvre : « *Pourquoi ne pas concevoir comme une œuvre d'art l'exécution d'une œuvre d'art ?* »[30]

Certainement, le don de Valéry pour l'introspection du processus poétique était stupéfiant ; son application à le cultiver infatigable ; et l'acuité et la subtilité de son analyse non seulement n'a point failli, mais me paraît être à son degré le plus élevé dans le dernier volume de *Variété*.[31] Je sens bien la

critique que pourraient légitimement me faire à cet endroit ceux qui ne sont pas enclins à placer très haut l'œuvre de Poe. On peut dire que j'ai fait quelque chose pour justifier le respect que Baudelaire, Mallarmé et Valéry éprouvaient pour Poe, en montrant qu'il y a une ligne de filiation d'un art poétique qui se justifie. On admettra que la théorie et la pratique de Poe représentent quelque chose de plus significatif qu'une simple anticipation réussie – non pas une simple anticipation comme les dessins de machines volantes de Léonard de Vinci, puisque nous ne pourrions prétendre que les inventions de Blériot et des Wright furent les résultats directs des spéculations de Léonard.[32] Néanmoins, quand nous faisons retour à l'œuvre de Poe en elle-même, pour l'examiner et l'apprécier, est-ce que le reflet de cette gloire nous autorise à lui assigner un rang plus élevé que si Poe n'avait pas exercé d'influence ? J'ai toujours soutenu que le fait qu'un poète n'a pas exercé d'influence, ou a exercé une mauvaise influence, ou une influence seulement sur de mauvais poètes, peut être tout à fait étranger à notre appréciation de son œuvre. Est-ce que le fait qu'un poète a eu une influence importante et déterminante sur de plus grands poètes que lui-même n'est pas également étranger à la question ? J'ai donné des exemples, qui auraient pu être plus nombreux, et qui auraient pu comprendre des analyses de passages de sa prose, pour montrer que Poe n'était pas un artiste accompli. Et je ne pense pas que les défauts du style de Poe puissent être entièrement expliqués et excusés par les vicissitudes de sa vie, ses faiblesses humaines ou les difficultés qui ont fait obstacle à ses travaux. Mais c'est précisément parce qu'il est un artiste imparfait que nous sommes disposés à sous-estimer ce qu'il a produit. Il n'est certainement pas un poète mineur, au sens dans lequel nous employons ce terme à propos d'un poète dont la poésie est source de plaisir, mais qui n'a apporté aucune contribution significative au développement du langage. Un poète mineur, dans ce sens, est un poète dont l'œuvre aurait pu n'être jamais écrite, sans que le cours de la poésie ait changé. Je pense que dans le cas de Poe l'étude de son influence non seulement donne une raison adventice pour que nous lui soyons reconnaissants, mais qu'une étude de Baudelaire, de Mallarmé et de Valéry nous aide réellement à mieux comprendre son œuvre, mieux en vérité qu'il ne la comprenait lui-même. Ce qu'une telle étude nous montre, c'est que Poe a apporté une contribution vitale à l'extension de la conscience civilisée – la conscience du langage telle qu'elle s'est développée dans les dernières années. Et je pense que reconnaître cette contribution de Poe peut très légitimement accroître le plaisir que nous prenons à sa poésie, aussi bien que notre respect pour ses idées,

lorsque nous revenons à lui en remontant le long d'un sentier qui traverse un siècle. Mais ce que je crois ne peut être pleinement partagé, si cela peut être partagé du tout, que par ceux qui m'accorderont que, dans la marche de la poésie depuis la fin du XVIII^e^ siècle, il y a eu un seul courant central, et qu'une grande quantité de belle poésie, dans plusieurs langues, se trouve, par rapport à ce courant central, dans la situation des remous, des estuaires et des arrière-plans d'eau. Et, pour moi, le courant central est mieux représenté par les noms de Wordsworth et de Coleridge, puis par Poe dans sa position étrange et anormale, et, par la suite, par Baudelaire et ses successeurs.

Comprendre ainsi la poésie du XIX^e^ siècle et de la première partie du XX^e^ siècle conduit inévitablement l'esprit à spéculer sur l'avenir. C'est une théorie soutenable – et ceux qui sont tentés de la soutenir trouveront facilement des preuves qui paraîtront la confirmer – que le progrès de la conscience de soi, l'extrême sensibilité et préoccupation du poète au sujet du problème du langage que nous découvrons en étudiant ces poètes l'un après l'autre, est un progrès qui doit finalement s'épuiser, progrès dont l'esprit humain doit rejeter la tension toujours croissante ; exactement comme l'on peut soutenir que la complication infinie de l'invention scientifique et de la machine sociale et politique peut atteindre un point auquel, pour se soulager de ces affres, il y aura une révulsion instinctive de la race humaine et une acceptation sans contrainte des difficultés les plus primitives plutôt que de souffrir le fardeau de la civilisation moderne. De telles considérations dépassent les limites modestes de mon sujet, et aucun d'entre vous ne vivra assez longtemps pour les voir se vérifier ou être controuvées. Mais si une telle révolution spirituelle était en route, elle pourrait se révéler à ses premiers pas par un malaise chez les poètes qui, dans les termes de leur art propre, se trouveraient confrontés avec une crise : et quand je dis *crise*, j'entends un état de chose dans lequel il faudrait *prendre une décision*.

ORIGINAL ENGLISH TEXT[1]

Throughout my life my critical interest has from time to time, poised itself, so to speak, over the enigma of Edgar Poe: hovered like a bird of prey, and always in the end turned away to find some more easily captured quarry. This rejection has come to appear to me to have been the evasion of a problem, of a problem perhaps central for my poetic theory and practice. I am at last taking resolution to risk my judgement, to make at least a preliminary attempt to discover the place of Poe in my own *poétique*. [I find it appropriate, and I hope of good augury, that my first considered words on the

subject should be addressed to a French audience, and should be spoken in Provence. For] it is impossible to form a critical opinion of Poe without taking some account of the work and of the opinions of three poets who can represent three literary generations between Poe and ourselves: Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Paul Valéry, [who rests in the Mediterranean graveyard which already was forever associated with his name.][2] If I find myself compelled to take seriously the poetic theory of Poe, it is because of my debt to the work of these three men. And I am not sorry that I have, until now, refrained from any continued study of Poe. Until the work of Valéry was ended the time was not ripe. For Poe must be studied in his contexts; and the most important context, I think, is that of his influence upon Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Valéry. Only now does his place become apparent, in a certain poetic tradition, [in a line of development which was, I am sure, the most significant poetic line of development for a hundred years.] And this tradition may at last have fulfilled itself and come to its term.

[I do not deceive myself into believing that the problem which I now face can be resolved by any one critic. Certainly not by myself. What I think is called for is a kind of co-operative examination, by English, American and European critics, to resolve the contradictions between the reputation and the influence of Poe in the several countries. I am an English poet of American origin, in whose formation the influence of Baudelaire and of the poets who derive from Baudelaire has been dominant. These qualifications are, I think, enough to justify my attempting to take part in the exploration, though they are certainly not enough to assure success. As I say, this is a problem upon which different minds should converge: I shall be satisfied if I can but give encouragement to the enterprise of others.]

No poetic reputation, of course, is ever settled once for all: the most that judicial criticism can do, is to limit the range within which a particular reputation will continue to fluctuate. And we must, at the outset, allow for a residuum of unresolvable difference between the appreciation of a poet by his compatriots and his appreciation by the most highly qualified foreign critics. We all of us, whatever our nationality and language, like to believe that we understand our own poets better than any foreigner can understand them. This is not necessarily true; and I mention the prejudice so that you may not assume that I intend to censure the opinion, and reverse the judgments, of Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Valéry. If I held such an arrogant belief, I should not think it worth my while to be talking about Poe at all. I respond to Poe partly as these poets did, partly as an Englishman does, and partly as

an American does: and it is primarily for my own relief that I want to arrive at seeing, not three images, but one image of Poe in which all these aspects shall be reconciled. I think that an English or an American critic can detect faults and limitations in the work of Poe, of which these French poets were unaware or with which they were not concerned. But on the other hand, I have, by meditating on what Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Valéry have said about Poe, come to the conclusion that there are aspects of Poe to which English and American critics have been blind.

In England and in America, I think it fair to say that Poe has on the whole been regarded as a minor epigone of the Romantic Movement, a disciple of Byron and Shelley in poetry, and in fiction a successor to the "Gothic" novelists. No English or American poet of any distinction has nominated Poe as his master; and of even indirect influence there is little to show. Some influence may be traceable here and there in the verse of Kipling; but the only poet in English who appears to have found any central inspiration in the verse of Poe is Edward Lear – whose poems were written primarily to amuse children. In America, we can readily understand the exclusive popularity of Whitman, with his patriotic sentiment, the local appeal of his subject matter, his exaltation at the same time of the individual and the mass, and his apparently revolutionary versification; and yet it is curious that the present generation of American critics and scholars, which has devoted such exhaustive attention to American men of letters, has left Poe to comparative neglect. I suspect that the view of the ordinary cultivated American is, that Poe is the author of a very small number of lyrics which enchant the very young reader and which remain in everyone's memory – but any enthusiasm for which is a remembered enthusiasm, retained from the early years of adolescence when a taste for poetry is just nascent and is quite uncritical. His tales also are read – or were read in my time – by every child brought up in a cultivated environment, but are seldom returned to by the mature reader. In fiction, unquestionable, his influence in America and in England has been immense: but it has been exerted chiefly upon those types of popular romance which are not taken seriously by the literary critic. [In the detective story Poe is the precursor of Conan Doyle who created Sherlock Holmes partly out of Poe's Monsieur Dupin: indeed it may be said that Poe in America and Wilkie Collins in England were the originators of the *roman policier*, and that every such romance written since has something of the one, or something of the other, or something of both.[3] It seems probable also that Poe influenced the romance of scientific invention, as developed

by H. G. Wells, and the romance of wildly improbable adventure as developed by Rider Haggard. But the readers of such types of fiction have, for the greater part, a taste limited to what is produced in their own time; and while everyone will admit that Poe was the inventor of several of these types, few return in later years to refresh their memory of the tales which thrilled them at the age of twelve or fourteen.]

[Upon French fiction of similar kinds Poe's influence may also be visible: but that need not concern us here.] What strikes me first, as a significant difference between serious European opinion on the one hand, and serious English and American opinion on the other, is the difference in the way in which the work of Poe is apprehended. For the three French poets whose names will recur in this discussion, Poe is a writer who expressed himself certainly in a great variety of forms; a writer whose work, it may be admitted, is fragmentary and occasional, as his poverty, frailties and vicissitudes compelled it to be – but a writer, nevertheless, whose work is to be grasped as a whole. [They regarded him as a coherent and powerful intellect, with the curiosity almost of a Lionardo da Vinci, which led him to follow a variety of paths; but nevertheless as an author the whole of whose work must be studied if we are to understand any part.] In England and in America, where critics are, I think, more inclined to isolate their judgements of the different parts of a man's work, Poe is more often regarded as a writer who dabbled in poetry and in several kinds of prose, without settling down to make a good job of any one genre. In the case of Poe, such an attitude is re-inforced by our perception of his faults of style. Let us then examine first some of the faults and limitations of Poe, as they impress an English-speaking reader.

Poe had, to an exceptional degree, the feeling for the incantatory element in poetry, of that which may, in the most nearly literal sense, be called the "magic of verse." His versification is not, like that of Shakespeare or Milton, [or that of Lafontaine or Racine –] or indeed of much lesser poets than these – of the kind which yields a richer melody by study and long acquaintance to the maturing perception of the reader who returns to it after a lapse of years. Its effect is immediate and undeveloping; it is probably the same for the schoolboy sensibility and for the ripe mind and cultivated ear. Indeed, in this unchanging immediacy, it partakes more of the character of very good verse (in one of the English senses) than of poetry. Yet it produces an incantation which, because of its very crudity, stirs the feelings at a deep and almost primitive level. Now, in his choice of the word which has the right

sound, Poe is not always scrupulous that the word should have also the right sense. I will give one instance in which we may compare the use of the same word by Poe and by Tennyson – who, of all English poets since Milton, had the most exact and refined appreciation of the sound of words. In Poe's *Ulalume* – to my mind one of his most successful, as well as most typical poems – we find these lines

> It was night in the lonesome October
> Of my most immemorial year.[4]

Immemorial, according to the Oxford Dictionary, means: "that is beyond memory or out of mind; ancient beyond memory or record; extremely old." None of these meanings seems applicable to the use of the word here by Poe. The year was not beyond memory, because the poet remembers, or feigns to remember, one episode in it very well; he also recalls, at the end of the poem, what had happened exactly a year before.[5]

There is a line of Tennyson's, equally well-known, and justly admired because the sound of the line itself responds so well to the sound mentioned in it:

> The moan of doves in immemorial elms.[6]

Here *immemorial*, besides having a most felicitous sound value, is exactly the word to suggest trees so old that no one knows just how old they are.

Poetry, of different kinds, may be said to range from that in which the attention of the reader is directed primarily to the sound, to that in which it is directed primarily to the sense. With the former kind, the sense may be apprehended almost unconsciously; while with the latter kind, it is the sound which operates upon us without our being aware of it. But with either type, sound and sense must cooperate; and in even the most incantatory poem, the dictionary meaning of no word can be utterly disregarded.

An irresponsibility towards the meaning of words is not infrequent with Poe. *The Raven* is, I think, very far from being Poe's best poem; though, because of the analysis of its composition which the author gives in the essay *The Philosophy of Composition*, it is the most famous.

> In there stepped a stately Raven
> Of the saintly days of yore.[7]

Since there is nothing particularly saintly about a raven, if indeed the ominous bird is not completely the reverse, there can be no point in referring

his origin to a period of saintliness, even if such a period can be assumed to have existed. We have just heard the raven described as *stately*, but we learn later *ungainly*, an attribute hardly to be reconciled with stateliness.[8] Several words in the poem seem to be introduced either merely to fill out the line to the required measure, or for the sake of the rhyme. The bird is addressed as being "no craven" simply because *craven* rhymes with *raven* – a surrender to the needs of rhyme with which I do not think Malherbe would have had much patience.[9] There is not always even such justification as this: to say that the lamplight "*gloated* o'er" the sofa cushions is a conceit which, even were it relevant, would appear forced.[10]

Imperfections such as these may serve to explain why *The philosophy of Composition – la genèse d'un poème* – the essay in which Poe professes to reveal his procedure in composing *The Raven* – has not been taken more seriously in England or America. It is difficult to read the essay without reflecting, that if Poe plotted out his poem with such deliberation, he might have taken a little more pains over it: the result hardly does credit to the method. Therefore an English or American reader is likely to draw the conclusion that Poe, in analysing his poem, was merely revealing the way in which he wanted to think, or wanted the reader to think, that he had written it. Hence the essay itself has not, I am sure, been taken as seriously as it deserves.

No poet, when he writes his own *art poétique*, can do much more than explain, rationalise, defend, or prepare the way for his own practice. He may think that he is laying down laws for all poetry; but what he has to say that is worth saying must be considered in relation to the way in which he himself writes, or about the way in which he aspires to write. We may learn from him principles which we can only apply in the writing of other kinds of poetry: but we are only safe in doing so if we keep in mind the limitations of his own type of poetry. Poe, for instance, has a remarkable passage about the impossibility of the long poem – which he considers to be, at best, simply a series of short poems strung together.[11] He could not, I think, have written these passages except for the fact that he himself was incapable of writing a long poem. He could conceive of a poem as only a single simple effect: for him, the whole of a poem had to be in one consistent mood.[12] Yet it is only in a poem of some length, as a rule, that a variety of moods can be expressed: for a variety of moods requires a number of different themes or subjects, related either in themselves or in the mind of the poet. These

parts can form a whole which is more than the sum of the parts; such that the pleasure we derive from the reading of any part is enhanced by our grasp of the whole. It follows that in a long poem some passages may be deliberately composed to be less "poetic" than others: these passages may show no lustre when extracted, but may be intended to elicit, by contrast, the beauty of other parts, and to unite them into a whole which is more beautiful than any of the separate parts. A long poem may gain by the greatest possible variations of intensity. Poe wanted a poem to be of the first intensity throughout: it is questionable whether he would have appreciated the more philosophical passages of Dante's *Purgatorio*.[13] Nevertheless, for certain poets, or for poets at certain periods, the long poem is impossible – though it ought to be possible for readers at any period to be able still to enjoy the great long poems already written: and what Poe has to say on this matter is not only of great interest but of great value, in helping us to appreciate the work of those poets for whom the long poem is impossible.

The fact that for Poe a poem had to be the expression of a single mood, can be understood better as one manifestation of a more fundamental weakness. I put forward what I have to say here very tentatively: but I think that it offers some clue to the dissatisfaction felt by many readers. It may also go to explain why the work of Poe has been, for many, the passion of a phase of development, of the period of life when they were just emerging from childhood. That Poe had a powerful intellect is undeniable: but it seems to me the intellect of a highly gifted young person before puberty. The forms which his lively curiosity takes are those in which a pre-adolescent mentality delights: wonders of nature and of mechanics and of the supernatural, cryptograms and ciphers, puzzles and labyrinths, mechanical chess-players, and wild flights of speculation. The variety and ardour of his curiosity delights and dazzles; yet in the end the eccentricity and lack of coherence of his interests tires. There is just that lacking which gives dignity to the thought of the mature man: a consistent attitude towards life. An attitude can be mature and consistent, and yet be highly sceptical: but Poe was no sceptic. He appears, on the contrary, to yield himself completely to the idea of the moment: the effect is, that all of his ideas appear to be entertained rather than believed. What is lacking is not intellectual power, but that maturity of intellect which is inseparable from the maturing of the man as a whole and the development of his emotion through the memory of a range of emotions. I am not concerned with any possible psychological or pathological

explanations: it is sufficient for my purpose to record that the work of Poe is such as I should expect of a man of very exceptional intellect and sensibility, whose emotional development had been in some respects arrested at an early stage.

Yet the men of genius upon whom Poe has made the deepest impression have been not at all of the type I have just indicated. I am struck, however, by the opening phrase of Valéry's essay *Au Sujet d'Eureka* in the first volume of *Variété*. "J'avais vingt ans," he says, "et je croyais à la puissance de la pensée."[14] There follows a succession of brilliant reflections, and a clarification of the meaning of the word *cosmogony*. The essay is of value, because of the account of himself which Valéry gives in writing about *Eureka*; it convinces us, not so much of the positive value of Poe's speculation, as of the stimulating effect which it had upon Valéry at the end of his adolescence, and of its importance for Valéry as point of departure. And it gives a clue to a different attitude towards *Eureka*, than that which an English or an American philosopher would be likely to adopt. The latter are more likely to read *Eureka* as an ingenuous effusion of a fluent writer with a smattering of physics and astro-physics, but ignorant of metaphysics and theology, of the structures of the neo-Platonists and of their criticism by the Church Fathers. For Valéry *Eureka* is *un poème abstrait*: Baudelaire had said much the same thing.[15] And this is a perfectly tenable view of *Eureka*. I think of a revealing phrase in *Variété* V.: "Quant à moi, qui suis, je l'avoue, beaucoup plus attentif à la formation ou à la fabrication des œuvres qu'aux œuvres mêmes . . ." and a remark a little later in the same volume: "À mon avis, la plus authentique philosophie n'est pas dans les objets de notre réflexion, tant que dans l'acte même de la pensée et dans sa manœuvre."[16] What Poe could write because of a peculiar limitation of mind, Valéry could continue to admire because of a still more peculiar absence of limitation, because of his ability to appreciate an intellectual structure aesthetically, without being distracted by consideration of its correspondence to reality.

So far, I have intentionally emphasised those blemishes and weaknesses in the work of Poe which have diminished his reputation in English-speaking countries. From such considerations, it is only too easy for the English or American critic to leap to the conclusion that Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Valéry overrated Poe simply because they did not understand him, simply because they did not know the English language well enough. I have already

intimated that I cannot accept this conclusion. [The possibility that an imaginative writer may be felicitously deceived, in reading the work of another poet writing in a language which the former has not mastered, is one which cannot be wholly ignored.] It is certainly possible, in reading something in another language imperfectly understood, for the reader to find what is not there; and when the reader is himself a man of genius, the foreign poem which he reads may, by a happy accident, elicit something important from the depths of his own mind, which he attributes to what he reads. We must also recognise that, in translating Poe into French, both Baudelaire and Mallarmé effected a striking improvement: the one, in translating the prose, and the other, in his translations of some of the verse, turned an English which is too often careless and shoddy, too often debased by tawdry ornament, into a French of [great] distinction of style.[17] But, on the other hand, the faults of which I have given instances, and others which I have not illustrated, are not such as can permit us to dismiss Poe as second-rate: on the contrary, they simply create the enigma of Poe's importance. I think it must be admitted by the least sympathetic critic, that everything that Poe wrote, even to his most trivial prose pieces, bears the mark of a highly original genius and a positive and unique personality; and that certain of the poems and the tales, once read, have left an ineffaceable impression upon innumerable readers. It is therefore worth while to enquire, whether Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Valéry cannot give us some clue, whether they had not each some affinity to Poe the identification of which may clarify our understanding and enhance our appreciation.

We must, of course, guard ourselves against the temptation to assume that Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Valéry responded to Poe all in exactly the same way, or that his work served an identical purpose for each of them. These poets, [being great poets,] are very different from each other. And the period from the publication of "Fleurs du Mal" to the publication of the later poems of Valéry covers the greater part of a century, and a century of rapid development and change.[18] If we are to discover the identities, we must also recognise the differences. We should expect that Baudelaire, as the discoverer of Poe, should have more mixed reasons for admiration; we should expect that Valéry, the last of the three, should admire Poe with greater precision and consciousness. And this is, I think, a part of what we find. We must make allowance for the fact that Baudelaire, in the introduction to his translations, was introducing his author to a new public, and therefore largely concerned

with Poe the man – or rather, with the type of poet to which he assimilates Poe. The picture of Poe is somewhat highly coloured, and more to the taste of the epoch of Baudelaire than to that of ours:

> Il y a, dans l'histoire littéraire, des destinées analogues, de vraies damnations, – des hommes qui portent le mot *guignon* écrit en caractères mystérieux dans les plis sinueux de leur front.[19]

What Baudelaire gives us is not a wholly satisfactory portrait of Poe, but a prototype of *le poète maudit*.[20] [The history of this type, with its Byronic origins in the sense of damnation inflicted by Scottish Calvinism, and its development into something so very un-Byronic, the poet as the votary and victim of beauty and perfection, is itself an interesting chapter in the history of aesthetics and in the history of the social conditions of art.] It is sufficient, for my present purpose, to point out that Baudelaire was attracted by the personality and the life of Poe, as a paradigm of his conception of himself and of his own rôle. But, in the course of what is presented chiefly as an account of the man Poe and of his history, Baudelaire lets fall one remark of profound importance. In speaking of Poe's essay *The Poetic Principle* (*le Principe de la Poésie*) he observes

> Il croyait, en vrai poëte qu'il était, que le but de la poésie est de même nature que son principe, et qu'elle ne doit pas avoir en vue autre chose qu'elle-même.[21]

Here is the germ of the aesthetic of a century. But the interest in Poe the man, in the poet rather than the poetry, in *l'écrivain des nerfs*, the poet of *l'hystérie* and *l'hallucination*: that is peculiarly Baudelaire's.[22]

For Mallarmé, there is rather the more minute interest in the technique of verse. In the massive and definitive *Vie de Mallarmé* by Dr. Mondor I find quoted the following interesting note by Mallarmé on Poe's poem *The Bells* (*Les Cloches*):

> Le poète, dans le groupe de morceaux qui compose ce poème célèbre, a usé librement d'un procédé que récuse la poésie française, c'est la répétition consécutive d'un ou de plusieurs mots dans un ou plusieurs vers. La traduction devait reproduire cette intention, voisine d'une curieuse manie, quand, toutefois, il ne résultait rien de contraire à notre euphonie, et qu'il n'y avait pas à essuyer (soit pour: *en même temps*) une lourdeur ou (soit pour: *cloches*) une brisure défectueuse.[23]

But when we come to Valéry, it appears to be neither the man nor the verse, but the theory of poetry, that becomes the centre of attention. "Je chéris," Valéry wrote in a very early letter to Mallarmé, "les théories si profondes et si perfidement savantes d'Edgar Poe, je crois à la toute-puissance du rythme et surtout de l'épithète suggestive."[24] But I risk this opinion, less upon the basis of Valéry's explicit statements about Poe, than upon my own reading of Valéry's practice and theory. In the same way that Valéry's poetry, and his essays on the art of poetry, represent two aspects of the same mental voyage of discovery, and complement each other making one *œuvre*, so for Valéry the poetry of Poe is inseparable from his criticism. And indeed, the purely technical originality of Poe, depending as it does upon rhythm, rhyme, and verbal devices possible only in the English language, has little to offer directly to a poet working in another language.

At this point I feel impelled to venture upon some observations of my own upon the term *la poésie pure*: or perhaps what I have to offer is rather my own definition of what this term means to me.

All poetry, I believe, starts from the emotions experienced by human beings in their relations to themselves, to each other, and to the world about them; it is therefore concerned also with thought and action, out of which emotion arises, and which emotion brings about. But, at however primitive a stage of expression and appreciation, the function of poetry can never be simply to create a reverberation or similitude of these emotions in the audience of the poet. You may remember the mythical story of Alexander's Feast, familiar to English readers because of a famous ode by Dryden. If the conqueror of Asia was actually transported with the violent emotions which the bard Timotheus, by skilfully varying his music, is supposed to have aroused in him, then the great Alexander was at the moment simply suffering from automatism induced by alcohol, and was in that state completely incapable of appreciating musical or poetic art.[25] In the earliest poetry, or in the most rudimentary enjoyment of poetry, the attention of the listener is directed towards the subject matter; the effect of the poetic art is felt, without the listener being conscious of this art. [Such a situation need not, for the purpose of my argument, ever have been actual, but may be considered as a mere hypothetical starting point of poetry; for even in the most naive enjoyment of a poetic recitation, there may always have been some conscious enjoyment of the way in which a story is told, as well as interest in learning of events of which the poet relates.] But, with the development of the consciousness of language, there is certainly a stage at which the auditor, who

may by that time have become the reader, is aware of a double interest – of an interest in the story for its own sake, and a conscious enjoyment of the way in which it is told: that is to say, of the style.[26†] We thus arrive at the point at which there may arise a delight in the discrimination between the ways in which different poets will treat the same subject: an appreciation not merely of better or worse, but of differences between styles which are admired. At a third stage of development of consciousness of language, the subject may recede to the background: instead of being the purpose of the poem, it becomes simply a necessary means in the realisation of the poem. At this stage the listener or reader may become as nearly unconscious of the subject-matter, as the primitive listener was of the style; although, [as I have hinted,] it may be that a complete unconsciousness and indifference, to the style at the beginning, or to the subject-matter at the end, is never actually found. For a complete unconsciousness of the style may mean that poetry has not yet appeared; a complete indifference to subject-matter may mean that poetry has come to an end.

It would be an error to presume that this development of the consciousness of language, which means that poetry, at each stage, presents new problems to the poet, implies a progression towards better poetry. We do not raise the question. Whether the increase of self-consciousness is a good thing for humanity is a question – different and much more comprehensive than any literary question – with which I am not here concerned. I only say that the important poet is the poet who recognises, and successfully solves, the problem of expression at the stage of self-consciousness, in the process of history, at which he finds himself and his contemporary audience.

Now this process of increasing self-consciousness – or, we may say, in other terms, of increasing consciousness of language – has as its theoretical goal what it seems to me we may call *la poèsie pure*. I believe it to be a goal which poetry can never reach, because to reach it would mean to put an end to poetry altogether. Poetry can only be written so long as it preserves some impurity. The Abbé Brémond, if I have understood him, maintains that while the element of *la poèsie pure* is necessary to make a poem a poem, no poem can consist of *la poèsie pure* solely.[27] What does happen, and has happened in what I take to have been the central current of poetry during the last hundred years, is a changing attitude towards the subject matter. And when we say that the subject has become "less important," we must guard ourselves against a misunderstanding. Subject-matter must, I think, remain important: but its importance in modern poetry has changed in kind. The

subject is important as means: the end is the poem. Instead of the poem being written about a subject, we find that the subject is within the poem. A poem, may, in fact, now have several subjects within it, each of which can be stated in other words; and it may yet be a meaningless question, to ask "what is the subject of a poem?" For the work of the poet may have been, to put together several subjects, with no relationship between them that can be intellectually formulated; and from their union there appears, not another "subject," but the poem.

[At this point I should like to repeat that the problem never presents itself as that of writing better poetry than what has been written. It is merely that our success, as poets, depends upon our awareness of the task which our particular position in time, in the history of our own language, imposes upon us. But as readers, we should not like to be limited to appreciation of the kind of poetry which corresponds to our contemporary consciousness. With me, and I suspect with many others, there can be an experience of relief, after a long session with the poetry of Mallarmé, to turn to the pages of Victor Hugo.]

I can now return to Poe. I think that we do find in his poetry, this shift in the relationship between the subject-matter and the poem of which I have been speaking. I think that a certain "purity" came easily to Poe: I do not here mean purity of diction, in the ordinary sense, for I have already remarked on his reprehensible carelessness in the use of words. I mean that in the poetry of Poe the subject disappears in the treatment. Even in the one or two poems in which, like "The Haunted Palace," the subject is his own disaster of alcoholism, the difference between the use he makes of his own experience, and that made by, for example, François Villon, is most striking.[28] And when I say that purity came easily to Poe, I have in mind the explanation of Poe that I have already put forward: the arrest of development at the age of puberty. His most vivid realisations are the realisation of a dream; significantly, the ladies in his poems and in his tales are always ladies lost or vanishing before they can be embraced. The subject-matter is in its very nature tenuous. Hence his achievement is less than that of the poets against whom we measure him; for we must judge poetry, from this point of view of purity, in relation to the work of purification of material that has gone into it. More, and more important, subject-matter has been transmuted, by these poets who followed him; and it is in this respect that subject-matter in poetry remains always of capital importance.

I now proceed to my final point: that of the development of the critical activity in the composition of poetry. There is, in English, a predecessor to

Poe, and a greater than Poe. The first great example of the critical consciousness in English poetry is Samuel Coleridge. It is true that ever since Horace poets have been writing about the art of poetry; but the modern introspection into the poetic process may almost be dated from Coleridge.[29] In his critical essay, the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge was of course primarily concerned with an examination, not of his own poetry, but of that of Wordsworth; yet he does anticipate the question which has fascinated the modern poet: "what am I doing when I write a poem?" But the brief essay of Poe, *The Philosophy of Composition*, is a *mise au point* of this question that makes it a landmark. The interpenetration of the poetic and the critical activity, which is the logical consequence of the increasing consciousness of language, is carried to its furthest point by Valéry. At this point the focus of attention tends to shift from the poem to the process of composition of the poem. Monsieur Louis Bolle, in his admirable *Paul Valéry*, observes pertinently: "Ce narcissisme intellectuel n'est pas étranger au poète quoiqu'il n'explique pas toute son œuvre: '*Pourquoi ne pas concevoir comme une œuvre d'art l'exécution d'une œuvre d'art?*'"[30] [Certainly, Valéry's gift for introspection of the poetic process was amazing; his application to the cultivation of it was indefatigable; and the acuteness and subtlety of his analysis not only did not fail, but seems to me at its highest point in the last volume of *Variété*.][31]

I am aware of a criticism which may justly be made at this point, by those who are not inclined to rate the work of Poe very high. It may be said that I have done something to justify the respect which Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Valéry entertained for Poe, in showing that there is a legitimate line of descent of an *art poétique*. It will be admitted that the theory and practice of Poe represent something more significant than a mere happy anticipation – not a mere anticipation like Lionardo da Vinci's designs for flying machines, since we cannot pretend that Blériot's and Wright's inventions were the direct outcome of the speculations of Lionardo.[32] Nevertheless, when we return to examine and appraise the work of Poe in itself, does this reflected glory entitle us to assign it any higher rank, than if Poe had had no influence? I have always maintained that the fact that a poet has had no influence, or a bad influence, or an influence only upon bad poets, may be quite irrelevant to our estimate of his achievement. Is not the fact that a poet has had an important and determining influence upon greater poets than himself, equally irrelevant? I have given instances, which might have been more numerous, and which might have included analyses of passages from his

prose, to show that Poe was not a fine or finished artist. And I do not think that the defects of Poe's style can be wholly accounted for and excused by the vicissitudes of his life, his human weaknesses, or the difficulties which hampered his labours. But it is just because he is an imperfect artist that we are disposed to underrate his accomplishment. He is certainly not a minor poet, in the sense in which we use that term of a poet whose poetry gives pleasure, but has made no significant contribution to the development of language. A minor poet, in this sense, is one whose work might never have been written, and the course of poetry would have been the same. I think that, in the case of Poe, the study of his influence not only gives an adventitious reason for being grateful to him, but that a study of Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Valéry actually helps us to understand his work better – better, indeed, than he understood it himself. What such a study shows us is, that Poe made a [vital] contribution to the extension of the civilised consciousness – the consciousness of language – as it has developed in the last hundred years. And I think that our awareness of this contribution of Poe's can quite legitimately increase our enjoyment of his poetry, as well as our respect for his ideas, when we return to him by tracing a path backwards through a century. [But my belief can only be fully shared, if it is shared at all, by those who will agree that, in the process of poetry since the end of the eighteenth century, there has been one central current; and that a great deal of fine poetry, in several languages, stands towards this central current in the relation of eddies, estuaries and backwaters. And for me the central current is best represented by the names of Wordsworth and Coleridge, than by Poe in his strange and anomalous position, and thereafter is represented by Baudelaire and his successors.

Such an apprehension of the poetry of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century inevitably leads the mind to speculate upon the future.] It is a tenable theory – and those who are tempted to hold it will readily find evidence which will appear to confirm it – that the advance of self-consciousness, the extreme awareness of and concern with language, which we trace in considering these poets one after the other, is a process which must ultimately break down, a process against the increasing strain of which the human mind must rebel; just as it may be maintained, that the indefinite elaboration of scientific invention, and of political and social machinery, may reach the point at which, in agony and relief, there will be an instinctive revulsion of humanity and a willingness to accept the most primitive hardships rather than endure the burden of modern civilisation.

Such conjectures are outside the scope of my modest purpose here; and none of us will live long enough to see their verification or confutation. But if such a spiritual revolution should be on the way, it might evince itself at an early stage by a malaise among poets, who, within the terms of their own art, would find themselves confronted with a crisis: and when I say crisis, I mean a state of affairs in which a decision would have to be made.

NOTES

1. As printed in *Essais choisis*, trans. Henri Fluchère. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1950. Pp. 410, [6]; 391-410. TSE's copy is inscribed by Fluchère and dated 15 Apr 1950 (Magdalene College Library, Cambridge, M.12.80). First printed in *La Table ronde*, 12 (Dec 1948), 1973-92.

Written in Oct 1947 but delivered in French in Marseille and in English in Aix-en-Provence on receiving an honorary docteur ès lettres, between 14 and 21 Apr 1948. TSE was due to have lectured in Southern France on 4, 5, and 6 Dec 1947, but the trip was postponed because of the general strike and stoppage of trains to Marseille. He wrote to his translator Henri Fluchère on 3 Oct 1947: "I have just settled down to try to write a paper on Edgar Poe to submit to the audience in Marseilles. I hope that you will agree that this is a suitable subject? I have never written on it before, but have long meditated it and it seems to me that it ought to be really of greater interest to a French public than to an English public, and as it will involve a great deal of references to Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Valéry it will give me the occasion to pay a tribute to the great meridional poet." This lecture was later revised for delivery at the Library of Congress on 19 Nov 1948 and published in the same year as *From Poe to Valéry* (7.290).

The sections bracketed by the editors in the English original were deleted by TSE in the lecture typescript but included in the printed French translation. The revisions TSE made in the English typescript have not been incorporated in the French text, so the two versions differ slightly.

2. Valéry died in Paris on 20 July 1945 and was buried in his native town of Sète, on the Mediterranean coast, in the same cemetery immortalized in his poem *Le Cimetière marin* (1920). On 7 Aug 1945, the Cimetière Saint-Charles was renamed "Cimetière marin" in homage to Valéry's poem.

3. C. Auguste Dupin, generally regarded as one of the first fictional detectives, first appears in Poe's short story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841). In his review "Sherlock Holmes and his Times" (1929), TSE had expressed the opposite view that "I cannot think of anything to which to compare Sherlock Holmes. He does not seem to be descended from either Sergeant Cuff or Monsieur Dupin" (3.602). When discussing how to separate the permanent from the transitory in detective fiction, he wrote in the same piece: "We have two standard works by which to judge: *The Moonstone* of Wilkie Collins and *The Murder of Marie Rôget* of Poe" (3.602).

4. TSE quotes "Ulalume" (1847), lines 4-5, from his personal copy of *The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, with a Selection of Essays* (London: J. M. Dent, 1927), 86. Poe wrote "Ulalume" as an elocution poem for auditory effect. In "'A Dream within a Dream': T. S. Eliot on Edgar Allan Poe" (1943), TSE argued that it "shows his power of *incantation*" (6.360).

5. "And I cried – 'It was surely October / On *this* very night of last year / That I journeyed – I journeyed down here – / That I brought a dread burden down here" (ll. 85-88)

6. TSE quotes from the lyric beginning "Come down, O maid" in *The Princess* (1847), XVII, l. 30. He earlier contrasted these lines by Poe and Tennyson in "Poetical and Prosaic Use of Words" (1943) (6.372).

7. Line 38, unbroken, of Poe's "The Raven" (1845); *read*: "In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore." Poe's essay "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846) uses "The Raven" to illustrate the principles he lays out.

8. "Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly," l. 49. TSE wrote to I. A. Richards on 28 Dec 1949: "Allen Tate thinks that the Raven coming from the saintly days of yore is O.K.; he tells me that I ought to have thought of Elijah. He also says that you can be stately and ungainly at the same time, and there I believe he may be right."

9. "'Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,' I said, 'art sure no craven,'" l. 45. François de Malherbe's prose criticism insisted on rational discipline in the use of language and verse form.

10. "On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er," l. 76. Fluchère's note in the French translation: "Craven *signifie* lâche, poltron; to gloat *signifie* couver des yeux, dévorer du regard."

11. In "The Poetic Principle" (1850), Poe stressed "that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase, 'a long poem' is simply a flat contradiction in terms" (*The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, with a Selection of Essays*, 91). He went on to explain that Milton's *Paradise Lost* can only be regarded as poetical when viewed "merely as a series of minor poems" and that there is "very good reason, for believing it [the *Iliad*] intended as a series of lyrics" (92).

12. Poe argues that the excitement of a poem cannot be sustained at great length: "After the lapse of half an hour, at the very utmost, it flags – fails – a revulsion ensues – and then the poem is, in effect, and in fact, no longer such" (91).

13. In his copy of the *Purgatorio*, TSE marked Virgil's discussions on the nature of love in cantos XVII.91-139 and XVIII.19-75 (Houghton). In "Dante" (1920), he referred specifically to cantos XVI and XVIII, which contain passages that he considered "pure exposition of philosophy, the philosophy of Aristotle strained through the schools" (2.232).

14. "Au sujet d'*Eurêka*" (1921), *Variété* (sixième édition, Paris: Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue française, 1924), 115. *Trans*: I was twenty years old and I believed in the power of thought.

15. In the long prose poem *Eureka* (1848), Poe attempts to explain the universe without having undertaken any scientific research to support his conclusions. Though most critics responded unfavorably to the poem, Baudelaire described *Eureka* as "un poëme philosophique" in "Edgar Poe, sa vie et ses œuvres" [Edgar Poe: His Life and Works] (1856), his prefatory essay to his translation of Poe's works *Histoires extraordinaires* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1869, 32), and translated it into French in 1863. In "Au sujet d'*Eurêka,*" Valéry defined it as "un poème abstrait qui est un des rares exemplaires modernes d'une explication totale de la nature matérielle et spirituelle, une *cosmogonie*" (*Variété*, 128). *Trans*: an abstract poem which is one of those rare modern examples of a total explanation of material and spiritual nature, a *cosmogony*.

In his letter to I. A. Richards of 28 Dec 1949, TSE wrote that when he turns his mind to the Poe lecture again he "shall be much surprised if I find 'Eureka' anything but nonsense. My only tip at the moment: try reading 'Eureka' as well as some of the Tales in Baudelaire's translation – it gives one at least a dim glimpse of why some people have been able to take Poe's philosophy seriously. Comparison of Poe to Coleridge, very much to the disadvantage of the former."

16. "Poésie et pensée abstraite" (1939), *Variété V* (Paris: Gallimard, 1944), 148, 157. TSE's translations in *From Poe to Valéry*: "As for myself, who am, I confess, much more concerned with the formation or the fabrication of works [of art] than with the works themselves." "In my opinion the most authentic philosophy is not in the objects of reflection, so much as in the very act of thought and its manipulation" (7.301).

17. Between 1847 and 1865, Baudelaire translated Poe's works, which were published as *Histoires extraordinaires* [*Extraordinary Stories*] (1856), *Nouvelles histoires extraordinaires* [*New Extraordinary Stories*] (1857), *Aventures d'Arthur Gordon Pym* [*The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*] (1858), *Eureka* (1863), and *Histoires grotesques et sérieuses* [*Grotesque and Serious Stories*] (1865). Mallarmé became familiar with Poe through Baudelaire, who had left Poe's poetry untranslated. In 1862, Mallarmé traveled to London and started translating Poe's verse. *Le Corbeau*, his translation of "The Raven," was published in 1875 with illustrations by Édouard Manet.

18. Baudelaire's collection of poems *Les Fleurs du mal* was first printed in 1857; Valéry's dramatic poem *La Cantate du Narcisse* came out in 1939, while the posthumous edition by Gallimard of his short prose poem *L'Ange* appeared in 1946.

19. "Edgar Poe, sa vie et ses œuvres," 3. *Trans*: There are, in literary history, similar destinies, real damnations – men who bear the word "misfortune" written in mysterious characters in the sinuous folds of their forehead.

20. Baudelaire refers to Poe as an "excentrique maudit" [cursed eccentric] in "Edgar Poe, sa vie et ses œuvres," 12.

21. "Edgar Poe, sa vie et ses œuvres," 14. TSE's translation in *From Poe to Valéry*: "He believed [says Baudelaire], true poet that he was, that the goal of poetry is of the same nature as its principle, and that it should have nothing in view but itself" (7.299). In "The Poetic Principle," Poe wrote that "under the sun there neither exists nor *can* exist any work more thoroughly dignified – more supremely noble than this very poem – this poem *per se* – this poem which is a poem and nothing more – this poem written solely for the poem's sake" (96).

22. "Edgar Poe, sa vie et ses œuvres," 29, 30; *l'écrivain des nerfs*: the writer of nerves

23. Henri Mondor, *Vie de Mallarmé*, douzième édition ([Paris]: Gallimard, 1943), 210. *Trans*: In the group of pieces that make up this famous poem, the poet has used freely a method rejected by French poetry: the successive repetition of one or more words in one or more verses. However, the translation had to reproduce this intention, verging on a curious obsession, when it did not result in something contrary to our euphony, and it was not affected by awkwardness (namely, for "time") or a break from the norm (namely, for "bells").

Mallarmé's translation of Poe's "The Bells" and this note were first printed in *La Renaissance littéraire et artistique* (17 Aug 1872), 133. Henri Mondor (1885-1962) was a French surgeon and literary historian with a particular interest in Mallarmé. First published in 1941, his biography *Vie de Mallarmé* contains 827 pages. TSE wrote to Eileen Souffrin on 17 Feb 1946: "I already knew, of course, that Dr. Mondor's book was probably the final biographical word on Mallarmé and I hope that the book will be reprinted as I am very anxious to read it and possess a copy. I met Dr. Mondor in Paris and know of his reputation."

24. This letter, accompanying the sonnet "Élévation de la lune," which was signed and dated "23 juillet '89" and appeared on 1 Oct 1889, was addressed not to Mallarmé but to Karl Boès, the editor of the journal *Le Courrier libre*. It is cited in Henri Mondor's *Vie de Mallarmé* (579), where

TSE likely encountered it. TSE's translation in *From Poe to Valéry*: "I prize the theories of Poe, so profound and so insidiously learned; I believe in the omnipotence of rhythm, and especially in the suggestive phrase" (7.299).

25. In "John Dryden" (1921), TSE quoted from "Alexander's Feast; or, The Power of Musique, An Ode in Honour of St. Cecilia's Day" (1697) and praised the way in which the songs of Timotheus, the court flute player, compel Alexander through a series of emotions (see 2.361, n.25).

26†. The sentence "C'est le stade de Virgile" [It is the stage of Virgil] in the French translation does not appear in the English typescript.

27. Henri Bremond's books *Prière et poésie* [*Prayer and Poetry*] (1926), reviewed in the *Criterion* of July 1929 by Mario Praz, and *La Poésie pure* [*Pure Poetry*] (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1926) sparked a debate about the purity of formal expression in poetry. Bremond explains in the latter: "Il y a toujours du pur et de l'impur dans un poème; mais la poésie elle-même, ou elle est toute pure ou elle n'est pas. Dès qu'elle paraît, elle *poétise*, si l'on peut dire, elle divinise les éléments impurs qu'il faut bien qu'elle s'annexe: idées, images, sentiments, toutes choses prosaïques, selon moi, par définition" (50-51). *Trans*: There are always pure and impure elements in a poem; but poetry itself is either completely pure, or it is not poetry. As soon as it appears, it *poeticizes*, if one might say so, it exalts the impure elements which it has to appropriate: ideas, images, feelings, all of which, in my opinion, are by definition prosaic.

28. "The Haunted Palace" (1839) was later included in "The Fall of the House of Usher" as a poem composed by Roderick Usher. Referring to Villon's *Le Petit Testament* (1456) and *Le Grand Testament* (1461), both long poems that lament his fallen state and personal misfortune, TSE wrote in "Modern Tendencies in Poetry" (1920): "What constitutes the terrible authenticity of Villon's testaments is that he *saw* his feelings, watched them, as coldly as an astronomer watches a comet; and without this cold and scientific observation he could never have given his feelings their permanent intensity" (2.214-15). The epigraph to TSE's "A Cooking Egg," "*En l'an trentiesme de mon aage / Que toutes mes hontes j'ay beues*" [In the thirtieth year of my life, / When I drank up all my shame], is taken from the opening lines of Villon's *Le Grand Testament* (*CPP* 44 / *Poems1* 38).

29. Horace's *Ars poetica* (ca. 18 BC) is a didactic treatise about literary craft offering advice to poets in the form of a verse epistle.

30. Fribourg: Egloff, 1944, 61. The book, inscribed by Louis Bolle (1919-88) to TSE, contains his occasional marginal strokes. TSE's translation in *From Poe to Valéry*: "This intellectual narcissism is not alien to the poet, even though he does not explain the whole of his work: 'why not conceive as a work of art the production of a work of art?'" (7.302).

31. In his essays in the 1940s and 1950s, TSE quoted several times from the fifth and final volume of Valéry's collection of essays *Variété*, first published in 1944. TSE's copy, inscribed by Valéry, contains occasional marginalia.

32. Leonardo da Vinci produced several plans for flying machines, including parachutes, a human-powered ornithopter, and other mechanical wing devices. The French aviator Louis Charles Joseph Blériot (1872-1936) was the first to create a working monoplane in 1907 and fly across the English Channel two years later in a heavier-than-air aircraft. The two American brothers Orville (1871-1948) and Wilbur Wright (1867-1912) designed and built the first successful airplane in 1903.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The twenty-four-page typescript, with TSE's holograph corrections, is in the Hayward Bequest (H1k), King's College. The twenty-seven-page French typescript, translated by Fluchère, contains TSE's corrections and introductory remarks (P20). A twenty-two-page early draft of the address, with TSE's ink and pencil emendations, is in the University of Victoria Special Collections (SC041, 1.3).

Hommage à Charles Maurras

Aspects de la France et du Monde, 2 (25 Apr 1948) 6[1]

Parler d'un homme de lettres français à un public français risque de me faire encourir un juste ridicule. De plus, Maurras, dans toute une partie de son œuvre, ne peut être abordé et commenté que par un de ses compatriotes. J'ai parcouru sans les étudier *Kiel et Tanger* ou la *Démocratie religieuse*. Mon jugement, aujourd'hui comme hier, sera donc basé principalement sur l'*Avenir de l'Intelligence*, *Anthinéa*, les *Amants de Venise*, *La Leçon de Dante*.[2]

Sur l'exemplaire de l'*Avenir de l'Intelligence*, je vois écrit de ma main « 1911 ».[3] J'étais alors à Paris, étudiant. Comment ai-je acquis ce livre ? Qui me le recommanda ? Si toutefois il y eut quelqu'un, nul souvenir ne m'en est resté. Je sais seulement l'influence première qui devait me soumettre à son emprise : je veux parler de cet homme de génie qu'était Irving Babbitt. Élevé en partie à Paris, il occupait alors à l'Université de Harvard la chaire de professeur de littérature française et il dirigeait de toute sa puissante personnalité un petit groupe d'étudiants, dont moi-même, passionnés par la critique de la littérature française. Babbitt, sans aucun doute, avait lu Maurras, car rien ne lui échappait du mouvement de la pensée contemporaine française comme de celle du passé. Mais je doute qu'il ait, autrement qu'avec une approbation tourmentée, parlé de Maurras dont quelques-unes des conceptions devaient lui paraître stupéfiantes. Cependant, sur quelques points ils auraient dû s'accorder. Babbitt, en Amérique, représentait l'opposition à ce qui s'inspirait du romantisme. Mais, pour Babbitt, ce mot comprenait presque tout, car ce qui n'était pas du romantisme pur devenait, selon son expression, « de l'antiromantisme romantique ».[4] Il appliquait, je le crois, cette épithète à divers aspects de l'œuvre maurrassienne.

Il serait hors de propos d'exposer ici les évidences de la mentalité romantique de Babbitt, mais une analogie l'unissait à Maurras : l'impossibilité d'accepter le christianisme, qui chez Babbitt se trahissait par un entraînement romantique vers le bouddhisme, et chez Maurras transparaît dans sa tendance néo-helléniste, son idéalisation du monde pré-chrétien méditerranéen. Si l'appréciation que je vais porter semble erronée, elle peut quand même jeter une certaine lumière : le seul classicisme possible pour l'homme moderne est celui qui embrasse la foi chrétienne. Je le crois, et cela

en dépit d'un certain catholicisme romantique qui est une aberration. Le catholicisme engendré par le romantisme ne peut vraiment qu'inspirer la méfiance.

Et cependant, Maurras, pour certains d'entre nous, représentait une sorte de Virgile qui nous conduisait aux portes du temple. Les forces sont nombreuses qui arrachent un homme à l'agnosticisme, au reniement et le poussent, jusqu'à l'extrême, au pas inévitable. Tantôt l'esprit se trouve soumis à des influences extérieures, tantôt à une puissance intérieure ; c'est alors le mystère de la grâce. Souvent aussi, un homme agit par réaction contre les forces extérieures, contre la pensée étrangère, plutôt que par une attraction positive. Mais, dans ces forces positives qui obligent la raison à répondre à l'appel de la Foi et qu'il faut distinguer de celles qui séduisent, on décèle l'influence d'autres hommes qui, eux-mêmes, n'ont échappé ni à la servitude ni à l'incrédulité. Pour ceux-ci, du point de vue chrétien, cette influence doit leur être comptée comme un mérite.

Par ces quelques remarques, j'ai essayé de suggérer ce que représente pour moi l'essentiel de Maurras, sa position dans le christianisme et le catholicisme, laquelle transparaît clairement dans son attitude critique à l'égard de la littérature.

En dehors de cela, je peux seulement énumérer quelques-unes de ses idées, dégager celles que j'accepte de celles que je refuse. Sa conception de la monarchie et de la hiérarchie, plus qu'à beaucoup d'autres m'est proche, comme à ces conservateurs anglais dont les idées demeurent intactes malgré le monde moderne. Par ailleurs, je noterai avec regret l'absence de sympathie que Maurras témoigne à mon pays.

Il y a aussi le style du poète. Si un étranger non-bilingue ne peut prétendre saisir pleinement le choix délicat des mots, la construction magnifique des phrases, enfin ce qui permet de juger l'excellence d'une prose, il lui est possible cependant de reconnaître le style d'un maître. Tels ces amateurs de vin, incapables d'identifier une origine, une année fameuse, ou de comparer deux grands crus, mais dont le goût naturel décèle la qualité, un étranger fera la discrimination entre un style qui ne dépasse jamais un niveau moyen et celui qui enclot une sensibilité créatrice. Les idées d'un écrivain servent un but dans une période donnée ; elles se doivent d'être assimilables de façon qu'il ne soit nul besoin de les reprendre. Mais le délice de relire un style aux formes parfaites se renouvelle sans cesse et je le retrouve toujours quand s'offrent à moi quelques-unes des pages magistrales de Maurras.

T. S. ELIOT

ORIGINAL ENGLISH TEXT[1]

[In attempting an appreciation of the writings of Charles Maurras, now that some twenty years have passed, I find myself faced with two alternatives. If I accepted the first, I should have to turn to my library, re-read everything that I have ever read of his work, and examine those parts which I have never read; and after that form and express a new opinion – an opinion which I am sure would not contradict the view which I had taken in the past, but which, as the opinion of a man with twenty years' more experience, would have to be re-formed and re-expressed. If this alternative be too formidable, there is no other choice than to return to the past, and pay my tribute in the form of an autobiographical reminiscence of the importance of the work of Maurras in my own development.

There was enough to deter me from either course, had I discovered any third way to follow. If the second exposes me to the charge of egotism – of being concerned rather with myself than with the author to be honoured – the first is the more pretentious and perhaps the more impertinent. It would be justified if were writing for an English audience; but] to write of a French man of letters for French readers might lay me open to condign ridicule. Not only lack of time, therefore, or the retreat from the ardours of the task, determined my choice. There is a large part of the work of Maurras which only a compatriot can have the knowledge or the understanding to criticise; and I have examined, but never read, such volumes as *Kiel et Tanger* and *La Démocratie religieuse*. My new judgement, like that of many years ago, would be based primarily upon *L'Avenir de l'Intelligence*, *Anthinéa*, *Les Amants de Venise*, and *La Leçon de Dante*.[2] [It is theoretically possible that a foreigner might have something to say about these works which would not be otiose for a French public. But it seems to me more modest, as well as promising a more original composition, to try to fix the place of these books in my own development.]

My copy of *L'Avenir de l'Intelligence* has written on it in my own hand the date "1911."[3] I was then a student in Paris; but how I happened upon this book, and who – if anyone – recommended it to me – I have no recollection. I know only what was the previous influence which disposed me to be influenced by this book. That was the teaching of Irving Babbitt, himself a man of remarkable genius, partly educated in Paris, and Professor of French Literature in the University of Harvard. During the previous year (1909-10) I had been one of a small number of students who had studied the history of French Literary Criticism under Babbitt, and who had absorbed the

point of view of that powerful personality. I have no doubt that Babbitt spoke of Maurras, for he had read everything and was as interested in every contemporary movement of French thought as he was in that of the past. But I do not believe that he spoke of him with more than qualified approval, for some of the views of Maurras would certainly have seemed to him extravagant. Yet there were points on which their opinion coincided: Babbitt was in America the great antagonist of everything which could be comprehended in the term romanticism. For Babbitt, it must be admitted, this term included almost everything, for what was not pure romanticism, often turned out to be, according to his judgement, "romantic anti-romanticism."[4] And I believe that he applied this epithet to some aspects of the work of Maurras.

[It is worth while, I think, to consider this charge for a moment. I came, in later years, to the conclusion that Babbitt was simplifying an issue by ignoring the possible contexts of the term "romanticism." This is a simplification possible to the critic concerned only with "ideas," but impossible for the creative writer to accept. In the former role, we may proclaim ourselves "romanticists" or "classicists" just as we may subscribe to one or another political party, and this declaration of faith is sufficient. But if we are creative writers – and, however modest our talents, self-conscious creative writers – we must recognise that we are all formed by the whole of the past and cannot repudiate any part of it. We are all born "romanticists," in the sense in which either Babbitt or Maurras uses the term, and "classicism" represents only an ideal at which we may aim. But the "classicism" at which we may hope to arrive must, because of our origins, be a very different form of classicism than any realised in the past. I doubt whether Babbitt could have recognised a new "classic" work of art if he had met with it. And he himself, it now seems to me, was a romanticist by heredity in being a product of the Protestant Reformation; as was Maurras a romanticist by heredity in being a product of the Revolution. To say this is not to depreciate their work; it is only to indicate a condition under which they worked.]

It would be irrelevant to attempt to expose the evidences of romantic mentality in Babbitt. But one thing that he had in common with Charles Maurras was an inability to accept Christianity. In Babbitt the alternative was a kind of Buddhism which I find romantic; in Maurras, a romantic neo-Hellenism, an idealisation of the Mediterranean pre-Christian world. My view may be mistaken; but the reader will be better able to judge if he is put in possession of it; and this view is that the only "classicism" possible for modern man is one which embraces the Christian Faith. I believe this in spite of the fact that there

can be a romantic Catholicism, and that this is an aberration: for romantic Catholicism always involves being a Catholic partly for the wrong reason.

And yet, for some of us, Maurras was a kind of Virgil conducting us almost to the doors of the temple. The forces which impel a man from agnosticism or denial, to the point at which he finds the last step inevitable, are numberless; a man finds himself at one moment directed by influences from without, at another moment led by an inner destiny; and this ends in the mystery of grace. To a large extent also a man may be moved by his reaction against outside forces and personalities, rather than by positive attraction. But as for the positive forces which impel some men towards the Christian Faith – in distinction from those which draw – may be reckoned the influence of certain other men who have not themselves escaped the bondage of disbelief: and surely, from a Christian point of view, this influence must be accounted to them for righteousness.

I have been trying to suggest, by these remarks, what is for me the essential Maurras – the ideas which point in the direction of Christianity and Catholicism. Apart from that – which is implicit in his criticism of literature, [and especially perhaps in *La Leçon de Dante* –] I could do no more than enumerate ideas, and disengage what I accept from what I do not. The conception of the function of the monarchy, and of social rank, is naturally more congenial to a certain type of conservative of English opinion untouched by the doctrines of the modern world, than it can be to others; but on the other hand I can only note with regret the absence of sympathy, which Maurras has sometimes manifested towards my country.

Finally, there is the style. A foreigner, and one who is by no means bilingual, cannot pretend to appreciate the precise and delicate choice of words, the fine construction of sentences, into which the excellence of a style can be analysed. Yet I think that he can, in a general way, recognise the style of a master. He is like an amateur of wines who cannot identify the vineyard or the year, or describe the qualities of one great wine compared to another, but who has a natural, if untrained palate, and can perceive the difference between a style which is merely the adequate medium for making a statement, and that which embodies a creative sensibility. The ideas of an author may serve one's purpose at a particular period of one's life, may be assimilated in such a way that one has no need to study them afresh at a later time. But for the delight of style I am likely to turn again, from time to time, at longer or shorter intervals, to one or another of these books of Maurras which I have cited.

NOTES

1. Title supplied by Gallup (279). One of three tributes printed under the heading "L'Hommage de l'étranger / Trois écrivains anglais" [Homage from Abroad / Three English Writers]. The other two contributors were Montgomery Belgion and F. Y. (Francis Yvon) Eccles, professor of French literature at the University of London. TSE was in France from 14 to 21 Apr, and an editorial heading preceding TSE's contribution states that the University of Aix-en-Provence has just awarded him the degree of docteur ès lettres honoris causa (see 7.124).

Henri Massis invited TSE to write a tribute for Maurras on the occasion of his eightieth birthday on 13 Mar. TSE replied on 18 Mar that he would write a short article after Easter focusing on the literary, rather than political, significance of Maurras's work. He sent the English typescript to Massis on 1 Apr saying: "I am very keenly aware of the inadequacy and even triviality of the enclosed short note. It must be taken simply as all that I could do in the time, and I do not consider that it has any value except as the symbol of a kind of loyalty to a great writer. Some day I should like to write an extensive essay on the work of Maurras, but that would be primarily for an English audience and would involve a long period of preparation. If this does not seem to you suitable please don't scruple to say so." TSE wrote to Montgomery Belgion on 31 Mar that his homage to Maurras "seems to me much better than my own. . . . I could not do anything really better without rereading with some care several of his books and there isn't time for that. After all it seems to me that the main thing is the willingness to say something on his behalf in public" (Ransom). At the time of this tribute, Maurras was in prison for having collaborated with the Vichy regime; after his conviction, he had been deprived of his seat at the Académie française.

The sections bracketed by the editors in the English original do not appear in the French translation.

2. In the geopolitical work *Kiel et Tanger, 1895-1905. La République française devant l'Europe* (1910), Maurras analyzes ten years of French republican foreign policy. *La Démocratie religieuse* (1921) is a collection of three earlier works: *Le Dilemme de Marc Sangnier* (1906), *La Politique religieuse* (1912), and *L'Action française et la religion catholique* (1913). In "The *Action Française*, M. Maurras and Mr. Ward" (1928) TSE had defined Maurras as "an important literary critic" who "has written as fine prose as any French author living," but also criticized *Anthinéa, d'Athènes à Florence* (1901) as "overweighted with the romantic Hellenism of the epoch" (3.373). TSE acknowledged the influence that *L'Avenir de l'intelligence* (1905) exercised on his intellectual development in his "Lettre d'Angleterre" of Nov 1923 (2.489). *Les Amants de Venise, George Sand et Musset* (1902) dramatizes the love affair between the writers George Sand and Alfred de Musset which lasted from 1833 to 1835. TSE conflates the title of his 1946 obituary for Paul Valéry, "Leçon de Valéry" (6.753), with Maurras's *Le Conseil de Dante* (1920), from which TSE quotes in the epigraph to *Dante* (1929), a book he dedicated to Maurras (3.696, n.1).

3. The copy in TSE's library (neuvième édition, Paris: Albert Fontemoing, 1905) is marked with occasional underlining and dated 1916. TSE included Maurras's work in his 1916 Extension course, calling it "sound" but "marked by extreme violence and intolerance" (1.473).

4. Irving Babbitt, whose course "Literary Criticism in France, with Special Reference to the Nineteenth Century" TSE had attended at Harvard in 1909-10, critiqued the romantic elements of modern thought in *Masters of Modern French Criticism* and *Rousseau and Romanticism* (1919).

Naturalized Subjects

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (7 May 1948) 5

Sir, – I am touched by the warm-hearted sympathy with which your correspondents Mr. Alexander and Mr. Fisher have championed the cause of the naturalized subject, and as one of the elders of that depressed class, I suppose I ought to thank them.[1] But for 21 years I have carried a passport "stating the fact and date of my naturalization" without being aware of suffering any disadvantage therefrom.[2] I cannot understand why any naturalized subject should object, or why he should wish to conceal this information, unless he is the sort of person who has something to conceal.[3]

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

T. S. ELIOT

24, Russell Square, W. C. 1, May 3.

NOTES

1. The letter from H. G. Alexander and H. H. Fisher, printed in the issue of 29 Apr (5), was prompted by the Home Secretary's statement in the House of Commons during the debate on the Representation of the People Bill on 27 Apr, in which he deprecated "an action which differentiated, after naturalization, between one British subject and another."

2. Alexander and Fisher point out that "the passports of naturalized persons carry an endorsement stating the fact and date of their naturalization" (5). TSE became a naturalized British subject in Nov 1927. His application was supported by Sydney Waterlow and Vivien's father Charles Haigh-Wood. The latter, who died in Mar 1927, was replaced by F. S. Flint in June 1927. TSE's passport, issued on 1 Apr 1938 and renewed until 1 Apr 1948, contains the following manuscript endorsement: "National Status: British subject by Naturalization; Imperial Certificate no. A. 15337 dated 2 November 1927" (King's L1f).

3. Alexander and Fisher drew attention to the fact that "certain appointments and positions, including the permanent Civil Service, are still barred not only to naturalized persons but even to their British-born children" (5) and called on the Home Secretary to remove such distinctions that effectively create two classes of British citizens.

Notes for speech replying to the toast of "The Guests"

TSE delivered the speech at Christ Church, Oxford University, on 23 June 1948 following Encaenia ceremonies at which he received a D.Litt. in the company of five other honorary degree recipients, "The Guests": Lewis Williams Douglas, the American ambassador; Léon Blum, former prime minister of France; Sir Arnold McNair, K.C.; Isaiah Bowman, geographer and president of Johns Hopkins University; and Linus Pauling, the theoretical chemist. As reported in the *Times* of 24 June, TSE was the last to be presented by the Public Orator (translated from the Latin): "No one has shown more eagerly the way that leads 'from out of the shadows and appearances to the truth'" (3). On 3 July, TSE wrote to his niece Theodora Eliot Smith, regretful that she could not attend the ceremonies: "I could probably have got you in to the Sheldonian Theatre, where the investitures took place (in Latin) and to the Garden Party. The dinner afterwards, at which I had to respond, after M. Léon Blum, to the toast of The Guests, was only for males" (Houghton).

Oxford has seen many strange sights – and also has heard many strange noises. But surely no sight could be more strange, and no noise more uncouth, than the sight of myself speaking on the same occasion as one of the most distinguished of living statesmen, or the noises which I hear proceeding from my own mouth.[1] Poets are expected to be both allusive and obscure. To obscurity I have never laid claim; and the allusion to the more famous discourse of Mr. A. E. Housman (on a less distinguished occasion) is not meant to be pressed too closely.[2] But poets are not expected to be good speakers: their minds may be thought to move too rapidly, but in fact move too laboriously, for graceful oratory.

I can only think that the gods, with that sense of irony which they have been known to exhibit, have deliberately cast for the role of responding to this toast, one whose undergraduate career at this university was particularly short and undistinguished. I took no degree, I competed for no prizes; I left with my only trophy a pewter mug obtained for stroking a college junior four at a time when all the real oarsmen were fighting for England and France.[3] The gods, in this spirit of irony, sometimes honour the most unworthy. To respond for guests of such varied eminence as those among whom I find myself, would exceed my powers, and keep me on my feet longer than either you or I should like. Perhaps the best I can do, is to offer my own tribute to Oxford, merely as a token for that of others.

It is, I think, a testimony to the spirit of this place, that those who come to Oxford as undergraduates have in the past learned much besides what they came to study: and that this applies also, to those who came with no intention of studying anything. What has been of greatest benefit, in the kind of education that Oxford gives, is often a by-product. *Et les fruits passeront la promesse des fleurs*.[4] I came here, many years ago, for the purpose of studying the works of Aristotle: a somewhat elderly American student, of the kind known as "post-graduates"; still young enough to be serious.[5]

Persona umile e peregrina.[6]

Such mastery of the *Posterior Analytics* and the *De Anima* as I may have attained has long since disappeared into limbo, together with the pewter mug above mentioned, which I think was appropriated by somebody attached to a removal van. What one has forgotten may be the most valuable part of one's education nevertheless; but what remains is something of which I was unaware at the time. I owe a great deal to my tutor, Harold Joachim. In working on the text of Aristotle he taught me, incidentally, the importance of punctuation. Some readers of my verse have maintained that this is a subject of which I am profoundly ignorant: so I would assure them that I could not have violated punctuation so outrageously, had I not devoted some attention to its study. And in criticising the papers I brought him, Joachim taught me what little I know of the art of writing English prose.[7] It was a painful and humiliating experience. I do not pretend that any prose I have written compensates the agony I endured; but my point is that practice in writing prose is of the greatest value to those who would write verse. Take care of the prose, I should say, and the verse will take care of itself: write nothing in verse, that could be as well expressed in prose. In order to write verse, it is necessary to know what it is that verse can do that prose cannot; and to know this, one must have some practice in what prose can do. I shall not labour this point further. My other great debt is represented by a ritual which at present, alas, is in most colleges impossible; but a custom which I hope can be restored – the ritual of breakfast parties, of learning to be alternately a host and a guest. I make no great claim for my attainments in this art either: I only say that what I learned I learned here. And I mention these two particular matters, in which I have reason to be grateful to Oxford, as a reminder that Oxford has never been a factory for

academic qualifications, a preparation for a livelihood, but a place in which the complete man can develop and mature.

A great Oxford poet and critic, whose work has made a deep impression upon my own mind, and with whose opinions I never cease to quarrel, fixed upon Oxford the unfortunate epithet: "home of lost causes."[8] Even at the time, Arnold was mistaken about the lostness of the particular cause he must have had in mind. But I think that the phrase "lost cause" is itself wrong. There are such things as dead issues. But there is no such thing as a lost, or as a securely gained cause. When we are most confident that a cause is won, is when a formidable reaction sets in against it; and a cause that is worthy, is always worth fighting for, and there is always some way in which to fight for it. It is surely in Oxford, if anywhere, that the new ideas should be nourished, which the world is not prepared to receive, and the old ideas should be kept alive, which the world is too ready to dismiss.[9]

I thank you, Mr Dean, on behalf of the guests whom I unworthily represent.

NOTES

1. In a letter of 27 June to Elena Richmond, TSE described the French statesman André Léon Blum, whom he followed in reply to the toast, as "a most charming man, who recites poetry with learning, taste and expressiveness, but who struck me as, like other socialists, a mediocre political philosopher." Blum served as prime minister of France three times.

2. In a speech at a farewell dinner given at University College, London, on 29 Mar 1911 to celebrate his appointment as Kennedy Professor of Latin at Cambridge, A. E. Housman remarked: "Cambridge has seen many strange sights. It has seen Wordsworth drunk and Porson sober. It is now destined to see a better scholar than Wordsworth and a better poet than Porson betwixt and between" (in Raymond Chambers, *Man's Unconquerable Mind: Studies of English Writers, from Bede to A. E. Housman and W. P. Ker*, London: Cape, 1939, 380-81).

3. TSE's "crew, of which he was stroke, beat the only other four-oar that could be mustered in wartime Oxford" (*L1* 75, n.3).

4. Added in the margin in pencil. *Trans*: And the fruits will surpass the promise of the flowers. This line (58) from François de Malherbe's poem "Prière pour le roi Henri le Grand" (1605) is discussed by Henri Bremond in *La Poésie pure* (Paris: Grasset, 1926, 98), a book TSE refers to in his lecture "Edgar Poe et la France," delivered two months earlier in Apr 1948 (7.142, 156).

5. TSE was twenty-six years old when he was Sheldon Travelling Fellow in Philosophy at Merton College, Oxford, during the academic year 1914-15.

6. *Paradiso* VI.135. *Trans*: "a lowly and an alien man" (*DC3* 69); see 7.128, n.3. TSE crossed out this quotation on the TS.

7. In his 1938 obituary note on Harold Joachim, TSE acknowledged: "To him I owe not only whatever knowledge of the philosophy of Aristotle I may have once possessed but also whatever

command of prose style I may still possess. . . . To his *explication de texte* of the Posterior Analytics I owe an appreciation of the importance of punctuation" (*Times*, 4 Aug 1938, 12).

8. In the "Preface" to *Essays in Criticism* (London: Macmillan, 1865), Matthew Arnold described Oxford as "home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties!" (xix).

9. TSE crossed out this final paragraph and wrote in the margin in pencil: "Not used."

TEXTUAL NOTE

The two-page typescript, with TSE's pencil emendations, is in the Hayward Bequest (H2h), King's College.

Statement on the publication of *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (1948)

In a two-page, undated press release circulated in typescript under the title "News from New Directions / For immediate release," Ezra Pound's American publisher announced:

> **Ezra Pound's complete CANTOS to date are being published in one volume on July 30th. The publisher of New Directions feels that this is an event of major literary significance – not merely because of the extent of Pound's influence on modern poetry, but particularly because the obvious poetic value of the CANTOS has lately been confused with the political issue of Pound's past.**
>
> **To allow this confusion to continue is merely to do serious disservice to Pound's art, and, if the precedent is established, to all art. And in an attempt at clarification and dispassionate evaluation, the following statements have been assembled.**

TSE's statement was preceded by that of Allen Tate and followed by those of Conrad Aiken, John Crowe Ransom, William Carlos Williams, Delmore Schwartz, Richard Eberhart, Robert Lowell, Theodore Spencer, and Horace Gregory.

To those who have read the previous Cantos, THE PISAN CANTOS will present little difficulty. In my opinion, they are superior to some of those which precede them; and, in the place for which they are intended in the whole work, they will hold their own with any. I find in them the same technical mastery, and a new poignancy of personal speech. Such an achievement is all the more worthy of admiration, because of their having been written under conditions which, for most men, would have stifled inspiration; and which, if they had not stifled inspiration, would certainly have prevented the author from bringing his work to completion.[1]

NOTES

1. TSE's statement here formed the basis for the blurb he wrote for the Faber & Faber separate publication of *The Pisan Cantos* in 1949:

> The title of this new section of the poems refers to Mr. Pound's detention, after the arrival in northern Italy of the armies of liberation, by the American military authorities at a camp near Pisa: a brief period in the author's life to which the reader will detect frequent allusions in the text.

To those who have read the previous cantos, this sequence will present little difficulty. In the opinion of some who have read these cantos in typescript or in proof, they are both more lucid and more moving than some of their predecessors, with the same technical mastery but a new poignancy of human speech. Indeed, we believe that in some respects these cantos surpass all those that have previously been published. Such an achievement is all the more extraordinary, because of their having been written under conditions which, for most men, would have stifled inspiration and prevented composition.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The text is in the John Bennett Shaw Collection (EPH 5015-203) of the Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame.

A review of *The Free Society*, by John Middleton Murry

London: Andrew Dakers, 1948. Pp. 292.

The Adelphi, 24 (July/Sept 1948) 245-47[1]

This is a curious and interesting book. The adjective "interesting" means here, that the present reviewer was able to read it through without at any moment finding that his attention had wandered. A book which can command such close attention from a reader whose capacity for interest has been diminished by half a lifetime spent in reading manuscripts, must certainly be interesting. But when I say that it is "curious" I mean that its construction makes it peculiarly difficult to review, without injustice both to the purpose of the author in writing it and to the purpose of this reviewer in reviewing it. To some extent, the several chapters produce the effect of collected essays, which mark the course of the author's mind through an extensive maze of discourse, rather than that of a work planned to a definite outline. There are repetitions; themes are repeated with variations; and the reader experiences at moments the irritation of being taken repeatedly over the same ground. In spite of this apparent formlessness, the book is interesting: because, I think, of the strength of the author's emotion, which is of a kind that promotes lucidity and expresses itself in a spare and simple style. It is not of any structural defect, however, that I have to complain. My complaint is that the author has made his book difficult to review by putting what seem to me two books under one cover.[2] He is, of course, aware of a division, which he has indicated by calling the first book "Part I" and the second book "Part II."[3] To those who are able to give general assent to the theses of Part II, the conjunction will not prove so embarrassing as it has proved to me. But I am afraid lest, in exposing my doubts and questions about the second part, I may obscure the importance of the first. Not that I regard the second part as unimportant; only, it is important for a different reason.

In the first half, then, Mr. Murry is concerned with the exposition of an attitude towards Russia. It is the attitude of one who has been a pacifist – a Christian pacifist; and readers who are not, or who have never been pacifists might at first sight presume that Mr. Murry's present attitude has no relevance to their own. In this they would be mistaken; but I think that what gives this part of the book its impressiveness, and contributes towards the

effect of complete sincerity, is that Mr. Murry of today is arguing with Mr. Murry of a few years ago.[4] When a writer convinces you that his primary concern is to get his own ideas right, rather than to persuade the reader; and when, in so doing, he reveals the struggle which he has had to make, in altering his beliefs, the result may be something that can be called, in a wholly eulogistic sense, a "confession."

In this part of the book there are incidental remarks which one is inclined to quote with warm approval. There are also specific suggestions as to what should be done. We may or may not consider one or another proposal desirable or practicable. I am sure that other reviewers will discuss the question of the Atomic Board of Control.[5] I do not think that the value of Part I of Mr. Murry's book depends upon the particular ways and means that he offers for coping with the Russian menace.[6] Its value is not that of a plan or programme, of an intellectual scheme, but of the revulsion of the whole person against something monstrous and foul. Such a declaration, at the present time, is, I think, more important than the formulation of plans. For the thing to which Mr. Murry is opposing himself is not so much a foreign power and its inordinate ambitions, as an infection amongst ourselves. This is a moral infection, conveyed through emotion rather than thought; and the need which Mr. Murry's essay comes to fill is the need for a moral indignation to counteract it. There is nothing more important in this part of the book than its repudiation of the *New Statesman* mentality.[7] The book should make many amiable and enlightened liberals look, at best, reprehensibly silly.

For my part, I cannot help wishing that Mr. Murry had made one book out of Part I and a second book out of Part II. They could both afford to be rather more fully documented and detailed. And the second part of the book arouses in me two misgivings. The first is a doubt about Mr. Murry's kind of Christianity, the second a doubt about his understanding of political philosophy. I do not think that there is any logical interdependence: it is preferable, in any case, to discuss them as two distinct problems.

In discussing Mr. Murry's Christianity, I must admit that I have not yet been able to understand it. He is evidently aware that his views will disturb the orthodox, for he says:

> To say that the life of the Christian Church depends upon the life of the free society may be shocking to many Christians, who would hold rather that the life of the free society depends upon the life of the Christian Church. [227]

I am familiar with the concept of "emergent deity," as I believe it has been called: of God as somehow the creation of man. Mr. Murry's God seems to be of this kind. A God who is not dependent on human beings who are aware of him becomes an abstraction, for

> the reality of the God who speaks through the moral conscience and the conscience of reason is dependent on those who hear and obey His voice. [227-28][8]

(This seems to me tantamount to saying, that when Mr. Murry makes a telephone call, his reality depends upon there being someone at the other end to lift the receiver and say "Hallo?") It is not clear whether we must keep God alive in order to save our civilization, or whether we must preserve our civilization in order to save God; the one thing certain is that they survive or perish as one, and that they are menaced by Russia. We and God, in fact, must hang together. Now, I am not concerned with whether such propositions about God are true or false: but to maintain them, and to continue to believe in Christianity or any other religion, seems to me just impossible. There is nothing left from which religious feeling can draw any aliment. To be told that Jesus Christ "emerges as the central figure of the Logos-civilization"[9] is discouraging for those who must have a deity they can *worship*, *love*, and *fear*, and who, if they cannot have that, prefer to dispense with deity altogether. But there is more than this. It would almost seem as if Christianity had had a single historical function – the bringing about of the "free society." It may even be that, in Mr. Murry's view, Christianity has now served its purpose and is no longer required: certainly so little of what we have known as Christianity appears to be required, that there seems little value in preserving the name. "[T]he Christian community has passed outside the tutelage of the Church" [239].

I am, as always when I read Mr. Murry on the subject of Christianity, unable to understand what he means by Christianity. Let me turn therefore, though without great hope, to trying to understand what he means by "the free society."

Here my difficulty is in believing that any possible society can be described by a single adjective; and when our sole, or even chief desideratum of society is that it should be "free," even freedom becomes evacuated of meaning. I cannot, incidentally, believe that a society from which war had been abolished, as Mr. Murry wishes to abolish it, could actually be free; it would seem to me that the abolition of war could only come about together with the

abolition of freedom. It seems to me that the "economic equality" also, which Mr. Murry declares to be the goal, would be achieved only at the expense of freedom. (Mr. Murry does not make clear how literally he takes the term "economic equality," for in one place he qualifies it by referring to *great* profit and *great* emolument as undesirable.)[10] In fact, Mr. Murry seems to me to be like most of us, in wanting other things besides freedom: and in making freedom, and economic equality, and the abolition of war, all absolute aims, he is wanting things not all of which we can have to the same degree at the same time. I am not even clear how far Mr. Murry regards the free society as something actual, and how far he regards it as the goal towards which we should strive: he sometimes gives one impression and sometimes the other.

If we are to employ any one set of terms to describe two opposed types of society, I should prefer (for what they are worth) *organic* and *mechanical*. These terms may also represent two types of political philosophy. Concepts like *freedom*, and *equality*, and whatever may be taken as antithetical to freedom and equality, such as *order*, *discipline*, *rank* or *hierarchy*, get their content within particular societies, each with its own history. A living form of government (which is itself an abstraction from the way of life of a particular people) may have the most unhappy effects when set up as a *mechanism* in another society: two hundred years of India ought to have brought that fact home to us. And the concept of "freedom" abstracted from the history of Britain and then reapplied to Britain *mechanically*, might also have unfortunate effects.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Written between 9 Mar and 5 Apr. TSE wrote to Murry on 5 Apr: "I enclose a few brief badly written and wholly unsatisfactory notes on *The Free Society*. Unfortunately it was a question either of doing something very rapidly or of doing nothing at all. What I want to say about the second part of your book would really need a long and carefully thought out essay. So please let me know how this strikes you and use it or not as you think best. In any case I hope that you will get other people to criticize your book because the issues raised seem to me of very great importance."

2. TSE wrote to Murry on 11 Apr: "You are too generous to my hurried notes, which do justice neither to myself nor to the book. Yet I think also that the latter part of the book, or some of it, does less than justice to yourself; and that the torrent of emotion which gives unity, impressiveness and indeed clarity to the first part, needed checking and directing, by labour of a slower kind, when it met the subject-matter of the second part. This is only to repeat my impression that it is two books, and that the second is in an unfinished state."

3. Part I (7-120) deals with such topics as the condition of peace, the democratic principle, the Atomic Energy Commission, and Russia; while Part II (121-289) is devoted primarily to the discussion of the character, purpose, moral personality, and the economic problem of the free society, as well as the rediscovery of Christianity.

4. Murry wrote *The Necessity of Pacifism* in 1937. He was a sponsor of the Peace Pledge Union and editor of its weekly newspaper, *Peace News*, from 1940 to 1946; during this period, he was widely known as a Christian intellectual. In 1938, Murry considered becoming an Anglican priest and had previously gone through a Marxist phase, leading to the publication of *The Necessity of Communism* (1931).

5. On 24 Jan 1946, the UN instituted the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (UNAEC) "to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy," as stated in the resolution passed by the General Assembly. Murry, who thought that the UNAEC could become a world-tyranny, describes it as "a supra-national body having complete control and full possession of the means to produce atomic energy throughout the world, and not subject to the veto-power of the Security Council" (42).

6. In order to counter the threat of Russian nuclear armament, Murry proposes: "Either Russia will . . . consent to the establishment of a world-authority for the purpose of preventing preparation for war, to whose decisions she will submit; or, if she refuses, then the nations which are willing to submit to such an authority . . . will combine to render Russia harmless. They will, and must, make war on Russia" (40-41).

7. The left-wing magazine *The New Statesman* changed its character under the editorship of Kingsley Martin during the 1930s, becoming antifascist and an apologist for Stalin's Soviet Union. Murry, by contrast, declares Russian Communism to be "a terrible caricature of the true purpose of Russia for the world – in its sham universalism, its sham brotherhood, its sham liberations, and its sham democracy" (59).

8. TSE changes Murry's "His voice" to lowercase, here corrected to source. TSE had previously observed in "Popular Theologians" (1927): "The pronouns are a little confusing, but it must be remembered that Mr. Murry spells not only those referring to Jesus, but also that referring to God, with a small 'h'" (3.69, n.4); and in "Views and Reviews: Waiting at the Church" (1940): "The disciples of Jesus 'were *persuaded*,' after his death (the lowercase is Mr. Murry's; the italics are mine) 'that he was present among them still'" (6.156).

9. "The Logos-civilization," writes Murry, "is the civilization in which man has slowly become more and more conscious of the obligation to seek the truth and to establish a society in which it can be sought. . . . the intuition of those who made the revolutionary declaration that in Jesus of Nazareth the Logos became flesh and blood was a marvellous prophetic intuition of the truth. He emerges, indeed, as the central figure of the Logos-civilization" (237).

10. In chapter 26, "Economic Equality the Goal," Murry states that "most Conservatives are in the relatively pleasant position of giving orders rather than receiving them. Their experience of duty is, in the main, deceptively one-sided. But the experience of duty in the real free society of peace will be quite different. The proportion of jam to the pill – of profit to enterprise, of emolument to talent – will be mightily reduced" (264).

A Personal Letter from T. S. Eliot

To the Editor of *Stage Door*: *The Magazine of the Newton Abbot Repertory Company*

Stage Door: The Magazine of the Newton Abbot Repertory Company, No. 1 (Oct 1948) 4-5

Dear Editor,

I have received your letter of the 18th. You ask me for a few words of greeting to the first number of a magazine to be issued in connection with the activities of the Newton Abbot Repertory Company. And as you say that the Company is giving three performances of *Murder in the Cathedral* in Abbotsbury Church in December, I have no excuse for ignoring such a request.[1] I recognise the importance of regional dramatic activity; the popularity of *Murder in the Cathedral* with local companies (as well as with dramatic societies in universities and colleges) has given me almost more satisfaction than its success in the original production; and South Devon is, though at a very long remove, my own region.[2] The play was originally designed for the conditions of a particular cathedral chapter-house, and for a particular occasion. It was not designed for a theatre; and I am happy to have it produced in a church. My first question, when I hear of its performance by a new company, whether of professionals or amateurs, is: "have all those who took part in it enjoyed the experience?" To the author, the pleasure of the actors in playing it, gives more satisfaction than the pleasure of the audience in seeing it: but I hope that the reception of the play by your audience will be such that the producers and actors will feel no regret. I send my best wishes for the future of the Repertory Company; second, for the success of the magazine; and lastly, for the part which I hope my play may have, however modest, in the record of the Company at its Golden Jubilee.[3]

Yours very sincerely,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE wrote this letter to the Hon. Sec. Miss Edith Wheeler (1869-1958) on 28 Aug 1948 in response to her request; the editor of *Stage Door* was in fact F. Jean Lewis. *Murder in the Cathedral* was performed in St. Mary's Church, Abbotsbury, between 9 and 11 Dec 1948.

2. TSE's ancestor Andrew Eliot moved from East Coker, Somerset to Beverly, Massachusetts around 1668. In a letter to John Hayward of 31 Mar 1937, TSE signed himself "Th. Eliot of Somerset" (King's).

3. From the letter of 18 Aug by Edith Wheeler, Hon. Sec. of the Newton Abbot Repertory Company since its founding in 1923, TSE misremembers "Golden" for "Silver Jubilee," the company "having carried on for twenty-five years without a break. . . . One way in which we are marking the occasion is by starting a magazine to contain news of forthcoming events . . . As your play will be one of the outstanding events of the season, we wondered if you would be kind enough to send us some greeting or message of encouragement which we could include in our first number and so give it a good send-off."

Introduction to *All Hallows' Eve*, by Charles Williams[1]

New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1948. Pp. xviii + 273; Introduction, ix-xviii.

It was in the late 'twenties, I think, that I first met Charles Williams; and it was through the friend who first called my attention to his work that the introduction was effected. A woman with a notable flair for literary talent, who liked to bring together the authors whose work interested her, and who was in a position to do so, made me read Williams's two first novels, *War in Heaven* and *The Place of the Lion*, and at the same time, or a little later, invited me to tea to meet him.[2] I remember a man in spectacles, who appeared to combine a frail physique with exceptional vitality; whose features could be described as "homely" – meaning by that word a face which is immediately attractive and subsequently remembered, without one's being able to explain either the attraction or the persistence of the impression. He appeared completely at ease in surroundings with which he was not yet familiar, and which had intimidated many; and at the same time was modest and unassuming to the point of humility: that unconscious humility, one discovered later, was in him a natural quality, one he possessed to a degree which made one, in time, feel very humble oneself in his presence.[3] He talked easily and volubly, yet never imposed his talk; for he appeared always to be at the same time preoccupied with the subject of conversation, and interested in and aware of, the personalities of those to whom he was talking. One retained the impression that he was pleased and grateful for the opportunity of meeting the company, and yet that it was he who had conferred a favour – more than a favour, a kind of benediction, by coming.

From that time, I read all of Charles Williams's novels as they were published; and I saw him, from that time, at the same house and elsewhere. It was not, however, until the middle 'thirties that I much improved the acquaintance. My play *Murder in the Cathedral* was produced at the Canterbury Festival in 1935; Williams's *Cranmer* was the play for the following year, and I went down with a party of mutual friends to see the first performance.[4] Thereafter I saw Williams more and more frequently until the outbreak of war. He was a member of the staff of the London office of the Oxford University Press, which, when the war came, was removed to Oxford. He was rarely free to come to London. I saw him only on my own

occasional visits to Oxford, where he cheerfully carried on his official duties in a converted bath-room in which the tub had been provided with a cover to make an improvised table. In May of 1945 I went over to Paris to give a lecture.[5] I returned late in the afternoon to my office in London, to find a message that Sir Humphrey Milford wanted me to telephone him at once in Oxford. It was too late to get through to the University Press; so it was not until the next morning that I learned that Charles Williams had died in hospital in Oxford the day before, after an operation which had not been expected to be critical. He died only a few days after the capitulation of Germany.[6]

Such is the outline of an acquaintance of some twenty years, which I am proud to think became a friendship – though I was only one of an increasing circle of friends, and though, in his last years, there were others who saw much more of him. There are some writers who are best known through their books, and who, in their personal relations, have little to give beyond what more commonplace, uncreative minds can give; there are others whose writings are only the shadow of what the men have given in direct intercourse. Some men are less than their works, some are more. Charles Williams cannot be placed in either class. To have known the man would have been enough; to know his books is enough; but no one who has known both the man and his works would have willingly foregone either experience. I can think of no writer who was more wholly the same man in his life and in his writings. What he had to say was beyond his resources, and probably beyond the resources of language, to say once for all through any one medium of expression. Hence, probably, the variety of forms in which he wrote: the play, the poem, the literary or philosophical essay, and the novel. Conversation was for him one more channel of communication. And just as his books attract and hold the reader's interest from the start, but have a great deal in them which only reveals itself on re-reading, so the man himself had an immediate charm and likeability, a radiation of benevolence and amiability which, while it concealed nothing, yet left the best of him to disclose itself gradually on better acquaintance.

As I have already suggested, Williams never appeared to wish to impress, still less to dominate; he talked with a kind of modest and retiring loquacity. His conversation was so easy and informal, taking its start from the ordinary trifles and humorous small-talk of the occasion; it passed so quickly and naturally to and fro between the commonplace and the original, between the superficial and the profound; it was so delightfully volatile, that one was

not aware, until after several meetings, of any exceptional quality about it; and appreciation of its value came all the more slowly because of his quickness to defer and to listen. There was also a deceptive gaiety in his treatment of the most serious subjects: I remember a bewildering and almost hilarious discussion in which we considered the notion, propounded by some early Christian heretics, that the world had been created at the Nativity.[7] (It was characteristic of his adventurous imagination, that he should like to put himself at the point of view from which a doctrine was held, before rejecting it.) Amongst a small group of friends, on a leisurely evening over beer or port, his talk would flash from one level to another, never apparently leading the thought of his companions, but seeming rather to respond instantly to the mood or tone of the last speaker. When it was pertinent to the matter in hand, he could declaim long quotations from one or another of his favourite poets, for his memory for poetry was prodigious and accurate.[8] He was, furthermore, a very successful lecturer. His means were always straitened; for many years he supplemented his income by conducting evening classes; and in his pupils he aroused, not only a warm devotion to himself, but an excited interest in the literature to which he introduced them. After his removal to Oxford, he lectured to undergraduates with, I believe, the same success. As a platform speaker, he was certainly unusual, and had, to an exaggerated degree, some of those mannerisms which uninspired speakers should most sedulously avoid. He was never still: he writhed and swayed; he jingled coins in his pocket; he sat on the edge of the table swinging his leg; in a torrent of speech he appeared to be saying whatever came into his head from one moment to the next. But what would have been the ruin of another lecturer contributed to Williams's success; he held his audience in rapt attention, and left with them the contagion of his own enthusiastic curiosity.

How, with his exacting daily work in a publisher's office, with his evening lectures and with his economic anxieties, he managed to write so much and so well as he did, remains incomprehensible to me. Some of his books – such as his *Life of Henry VII* – were frankly pot-boilers;[9] but he always boiled an honest pot. And besides what could be considered (if it had been less well done) merely hack-work, and besides the financial lash on his back in writing even what he wanted to write, much of his work, especially for the theatre, was done without expectation of adequate remuneration and often without expectation of payment at all. He would respond to almost any appeal, and produce a masque or play for a particular occasion for some obscure group of amateurs. Yet he left behind him a considerable

number of books which should endure, because there is nothing else that is like them or could take their place.

I have already tried to indicate the unity between the man and the work; and it follows that there is a unity between his works of very different kinds. Much of his work may appear to realize its form only imperfectly; but it is also true in a measure to say that Williams invented his own forms – or to say that no form, if he had obeyed all its conventional laws, could have been satisfactory for what he wanted to say. What it is, essentially, that he had to say, comes near to defying definition. It was not simply a philosophy, a theology, or a set of ideas: it was primarily something imaginative. Perhaps I can give some hint of it by returning for a moment to the man. I have said that Williams seemed equally at ease among every sort and condition of men, naturally and unconsciously, without envy or contempt, without subservience or condescension. I have always believed that he would have been equally at ease in every kind of supernatural company; that he would never have been surprised or disconcerted by the intrusion of any visitor from another world, whether kindly or malevolent; and that he would have shown exactly the same natural ease and courtesy, with an exact awareness of how one should behave, to an angel, a demon, a human ghost, or an elemental. For him there was no frontier between the material and the spiritual world. Had I ever had to spend a night in a haunted house, I should have felt secure with Williams in my company: he was somehow protected from evil, and was himself a protection. He could have joked with the devil and turned the joke against him. To him the supernatural was perfectly natural, and the natural was also supernatural. And this peculiarity gave him that profound insight into Good and Evil, into the heights of Heaven and the depths of Hell, which provides both the immediate thrill, and the permanent message of his novels.

While this theme runs through all of Williams's best work, it is made most apprehensible in this series of novels, from *War in Heaven* to *All Hallows' Eve*. Not having known him in his earlier years, I do not know what literary influences were strongest upon him at the beginning. I suspect some influence from Chesterton, and especially, in connection with the novels, an influence of *The Man Who Was Thursday*. If this influence is present, it is most present in the first novel, *War in Heaven*, and becomes fainter in the later work.[10] (Chesterton may also have influenced the early verse; Williams's poetry became more and more modern and original in form.) But I suggest a derivation only to point a difference. Chesterton's *The Man Who Was*

Thursday is an allegory; it has a meaning which is meant to be discovered at the end; while we can enjoy it in reading, simply because of the swiftly moving plot and the periodic surprises, it is intended to convey a definite moral and religious point expressible in intellectual terms. It gives you *ideas*, rather than *feelings*, of another world. Williams has no such "palpable design" upon his reader. His aim is to make you partake of a kind of experience that he has had, rather than to make you accept some dogmatic belief. This gives him an affinity with writers of an entirely different type of supernatural thriller from Chesterton's: with writers as different as Poe, Walter de la Mare, Montague James, Le Fanu and Arthur Machen.[11] But the danger of this second type of story is that its thrills are apt to turn into pure sensationalism. If Poe, at his best, as in *The Fall of the House of Usher* or *Ligeia*, escapes this accusation, it is because the symbolism of nightmare has its reference in the psychological ailment of Poe, which is itself a serious matter. If De la Mare escapes it, at his best, it is because he gives you a perception of something which you can interpret as you please. But with inferior stories of supernatural horror of this type, you feel that the supernatural world is not really believed in, but is merely being exploited for an immediate but very transient effect upon the reader. The nearest approximation to Williams's effects that I can think of, is given by Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*;[12] and even here, I feel that the literary craftsman is too obviously the manipulator of the scene.

The stories of Charles Williams, then, are not like those of Edgar Allan Poe, woven out of morbid psychology – I have never known a healthier-minded man than Williams. They are not like those of Chesterton, intended to teach the reader. And they are certainly not an exploitation of the supernatural for the sake of the immediate shudder. Williams is telling us about a world of experience known to him: he does not merely persuade us to believe in something, he communicates this experience that he has had. When I say that we are persuaded to believe in the supernatural world of Charles Williams, I do not mean that we necessarily give complete credence to all the apparatus of magic, white or black, that he employs. There is much which he has invented, or borrowed from the literature of the occult, merely for the sake of telling a good story. In reading *All Hallows' Eve*, we can, if we like, believe that the methods of the magician Simon for controlling mysterious forces could all be used with success by anyone with suitable natural gifts and special training. We can, on the other hand, find the machinery of the story no more credible than that of any popular tale of vampires,

werewolves, or demonic possession. But whether credulous or incredulous about the actual kinds of event in the story, we come to perceive that they are the vehicle for communicating a para-normal experience with which the author is familiar, for introducing us into a real world in which he is at home.

The conflict which is the theme of every one of Williams's novels, is not merely the conflict between good and bad men, in the usual sense. No one was less confined to conventional morality, in judging good and bad behaviour, than Williams: his morality is that of the Gospels. He sees the struggle between Good and Evil as carried on, more or less blindly, by men and women who are often only the instruments of higher or lower powers, but who always have the freedom to choose to which powers they will submit themselves. Simon, in this story, is a most austere ascetic, but he is evil; Evelyn is a woman who appears too insignificant, too petty in her faults, to be really "bad," but yet, just because she is no more than pettiness, she delivers herself willingly into the hand of evil. Her friend, who makes the other choice, is also a rather commonplace woman; but, having lived just well enough to be able to choose the good, she develops in the light of that good she follows, and learns the meaning of Love. Williams's understanding of Evil was profound. Had he himself not always seen Evil, unerringly, as the contrast to Good – had he understood Evil, so far as it can be understood, without knowing the Good – there are passages in this book, and in other books (notably in *Descent Into Hell*)[13] which would only be outrageous and foul. He is concerned, not with the Evil of conventional morality and the ordinary manifestations by which we recognise it, but with the essence of Evil; it is therefore Evil which has no power to attract us, for we see it as the repulsive thing it is, and as the despair of the damned from which we recoil.

It would be easy, but not particularly profitable, to classify Williams as a "mystic." He knew, and could put into words, states of consciousness of a mystical kind, and the sort of elusive experience which many people have once or twice in a life-time. (I am thinking of certain passages in *The Place of the Lion*, but there is no novel without them.) And if "mysticism" means a belief in the supernatural, and in its operation in the natural world, then Williams was a mystic: but that is only belief in what adherents of every religion in the world profess to believe. His is a mysticism, not of curiosity, or of the lust for power, but of Love; and Love, in the meaning which it had for Williams – as readers of his study of Dante, called *The Figure of Beatrice*, will know[14] – is a deity of whom most human beings seldom see more than the shadow. But in his novels he is as much concerned with quite ordinary

human beings, with their struggle among the shadows, their weaknesses and self-deceptions, their occasional moments of understanding, as with the Vision of Love towards which creation strives.

His personages have a reality, an existence in their own right, which differentiates them from the ordinary puppets of the usual adventure story. Only as much of the reality of each character is given as is relevant: the rest could be supplied. In *All Hallows' Eve*, we are given only enough of the characters of Richard Furnival and his friend Jonathan to establish their relations with Lester and Betty respectively; the character of Betty is necessarily not more vivid than it is, because of the conditions of the twilight world in which her mother has kept her; and the mother herself is inevitably simplified in terms of the control over her exercised by the magician. And Simon himself is defined by his function of representing the single-minded lust for unlawful and unlimited power. It is to the two young women whose destinies are so different, Lester and Evelyn, that Williams devotes his analysis; and a study of these two figures will reveal his understanding of the depths and intricacies of human nature. And the delineation of the relationship between Lester and her husband, as seen by Lester after she has begun her journey towards enlightenment, shows great psychological insight.

I hesitated before writing this introduction, for the very fact of an introduction might, I felt, give a false impression of the book to be introduced. It might suggest that the book is hard reading, or that it is perhaps a book for some other type of reader than that to which the prospective reader belongs. So I want to make clear that these novels of Williams, including *All Hallows' Eve*, are first of all very good reading, say on a train journey or an air flight for which one buys a novel from a bookstall, perhaps without even noticing the name of the author. They are good reading even for those who never read a novel more than once, and who demand only that it should keep them interested for two or three hours. I believe that is how Williams himself would like them to be read, the first time; for he was a gay and simple man, with a keen sense of adventure, entertainment and drollery. The deeper things are there just because they belonged to the world he lived in, and he could not have kept them out. For the reader who can appreciate them, there are terrors in the pit of darkness into which he can make us look; but in the end, we are brought nearer to what another modern explorer of the darkness has called "the laughter at the heart of things."[15]

T. S. ELIOT

London, August 14, 1948

NOTES

1. Dated 14 Aug 1948, TSE's introduction to the posthumous American edition was preceded by his obituary for Williams in the *Times* of 17 May 1945 (6.623) and his appreciation broadcast on 5 Oct 1946, "The Significance of Charles Williams" (6.772). The English edition was published by Faber & Faber in 1945 without an introduction.

2. The woman remains unidentified. The two evidently met in Mar 1929, shortly before 28 Mar when Williams sent TSE the manuscript of an essay he was writing about him. In his reply of 2 Apr, TSE addressed him as "Dear Mr Williams" and closed, "Looking forward to seeing you again" (*L4* 472).

TSE previously described *War in Heaven* (1930) as "the story of what happened when the Holy Grail . . . turns up in modern England; and of the struggle for its possession, in which supernatural powers, both good and evil, join" (6.773). *The Place of the Lion*, discussed later in this introduction, appeared in 1931.

3. TSE wrote earlier of Williams that "behind the evident modesty and simplicity, was that much rarer gift – humility. Such humility as, in any company, can charm and put at ease the most exalted, and subdue the most shameless" (6.774).

4. *Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury* was, like TSE's play, produced in the Chapter House of Canterbury Cathedral. TSE attended the opening performance on 20 June 1936 and afterward wrote to Williams on 6 July: "I have been meaning to write to tell you how much I enjoyed and admired your play. I tried to express a little of my appreciation on the occasion, but for myself I never place much confidence in the verbal remarks of my friends at such moments, as they may possibly be no more than politeness. I do really think that you made a great success of it, and I hope that it will be revived in London."

5. TSE was in Paris lecturing on "Le Rôle social des poètes" (6.639) and attending conferences for the British Council from 5 to 15 May, the day of Williams's death. "I returned from Paris late last night," TSE wrote to Sir Humphrey Milford on 16 May. "The death of Charles Williams comes indeed as a great shock to me personally. He was a loved friend as well as an author whose work I very much admired and which, I feel, has never yet received its due appreciation."

6. Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allies on 7 May 1945, bringing an end to war in Europe; Japan's surrender on 15 Aug brought World War II to a close.

7. TSE possibly refers to the heresy of Marcionism. Marcion of Sinope (ca. 85-160) taught that the evil deity of the Old Testament, who created the world, kept humanity in subjugation. He was overthrown when the true "hidden" God sent Christ, whose teachings would unravel this evil creation and expose the deeper, spiritual one concealed underneath it. In Marcionism, the nativity of Christ represents the pivot point at which the old world starts to collapse and the new one begins to appear. Though Marcion denied the corporeality of Christ's human form and rejected Luke's nativity narratives, he did believe that Christ came to earth, in however illusory a form, and that his coming heralded a new order.

8. As TSE clarified in "The Significance of Charles Williams," "His mind was well stored: his passion for poetry and a retentive memory seemed to make it possible for him to quote, appropriately and at any length, from any part of the masterpieces he loved, such as *Paradise Lost* or Wordsworth's *Prelude*" (6.774).

9. *Henry VII* (London: Arthur Barker, 1937)

10. TSE stated in his discussion of *War in Heaven* in "The Significance of Charles Williams": "The nearest comparison I can make to these stories of Williams's, is Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday*. I admire that story very much: but I think it is Chesterton who suffers by the comparison. Williams has not Chesterton's gift for humour and paradox. But, on the other hand, he is not writing his story in order to point a moral; he has no obvious design to instruct and convert the reader. It is rather that he wants to write an exciting mystery story, and knows how to do it" (6.773-74).

11. All versatile authors writing also in the genres of ghost and horror stories, mystery novels, and tales of the supernatural: Edgar Allan Poe, perhaps best known in these regards for "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "Ligeia"; Walter de la Mare (1873-1956), for "All Hallows"; M. R. (Montague Rhodes) James (1862-1936), for "A View from a Hill"; Irish author Sheridan Le Fanu (1814-73), for *Uncle Silas*; and Welsh author Arthur Machen, for *The Great God Pan*.

12. Robert Louis Stevenson's short novel *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), which TSE discusses briefly in his 1927 review of G. K. Chesterson's *Robert Louis Stevenson* (3.316).

13. London: Faber & Faber, 1937

14. London: Faber & Faber, 1943. TSE stated that the critical volume "is at once a good introduction to Dante and to the thought of Charles Williams" (6.773).

15. From *The Timeless Moment* (Faber, 1946) and *The Happy Issue* (Faber, 1948) by TSE's friend Herbert Warner Allen (1881-1968), journalist and author for whom TSE wrote the blurb of each volume. While Allen uses the phrase in *The Timeless Moment* (219), TSE quotes from its full treatment in chapter 11 of *The Happy Issue*, "The Laughter at the Heart of Things," writing in the blurb: "While the Way of Illumination is beset with terrors and dangers, he makes clear in his final chapter, that at the end of the journey we shall find 'the laughter at the heart of things.'" On 28 Dec 1947, Allen sent TSE a descriptive text for the blurb: "At the heart of things lies laughter, the laughing surprise of the discovery that God is not only in his heaven but in ourselves, and a dream of life after death seeks to foreshadow the trials through which the spirit is led to the beatitude of this laughter by the purification and reordering of the experience which composes the immortal fabric of his soul. And so the book ends with the conclusion that in the living knowledge of the ever-presence of universal Love lies the happy issue out of all afflictions."

Notes towards the Definition of Culture

London: Faber & Faber, 1962. Pp. 124.[1]

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PREFACE TO THE 1962 EDITION[2]

These "Notes" began to take shape towards the end of the Second World War. When it was suggested that they should be reprinted in "paper back" form, I re-read them for the first time for some years, expecting that I should have to qualify some of the opinions expressed herein. I found to my surprise that I had nothing to retract, and nothing upon which I was disposed to enlarge. One footnote, on page 70 [7.237], I have re-written: it may still be that I have tried to say too much too briefly, and that the notion needs further elaboration. Here and there I have tried to improve a sentence without altering the sense. I owe to a friend, the late Richard Jennings, the correction of a spelling which gives a false etymology (*autarchy* corrected to *autarky* on page 116 [7.272]).[3]

I have lately had occasion to review my literary criticism over forty years and account for developments and changes of opinion, and I propose one day to submit my social criticism to the same examination.[4] For as a man matures, and acquires greater experience of the world, the years may be expected to bring about even greater changes in his views on social and

political matters than in his tastes and opinions in the field of literature. I should not now, for instance, call myself a "royalist" *tout court*, as I once did:[5] I would say that I am in favour of retaining the monarchy in every country in which a monarchy still exists. But that question, as well as others on which my views, or the way in which I would express my views, have changed, or developed, is not touched upon in the present essay.

T. S. E.

October, 1961.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

This essay was begun four or five years ago. A preliminary sketch, under the same title, was published in three successive numbers of *The New English Weekly*. From this sketch took shape a paper called "Cultural Forces in the Human Order," which appeared in the volume *Prospect for Christendom*, edited by Mr. Maurice B. Reckitt (Faber: 1945): a revision of this paper forms the first chapter of the present book. The second chapter is a revision of a paper published in *The New English Review* in October, 1945.[6]

I have added as an appendix the English text of three broadcast talks to Germany which have appeared under the title of "Die Einheit der Europäischen Kultur" (Carl Habel Verlagsbuchhandlung, Berlin: 1946).

Throughout this study, I recognise a particular debt to the writings of Canon V. A. Demant, Mr. Christopher Dawson, and the late Professor Karl Mannheim. It is the more necessary to acknowledge this debt in general, since I have not in my text referred to the first two of these writers, and since my debt to the third is much greater than appears from the one context in which I discuss his theory.

I have also profited by reading an article by Mr. Dwight Macdonald in *Politics* (New York) for February 1944, entitled "A Theory of 'Popular Culture'"; and an anonymous critique of this article in the issue of the same periodical for November 1946.[7] Mr. Macdonald's theory strikes me as the best *alternative* to my own that I have seen.

T. S. E.

January, 1948.

INTRODUCTION

> I think our studies ought to be all but purposeless. They want to be pursued with chastity, like mathematics. – Acton.[8]

My purpose in writing the following chapters is not, as might appear from a casual inspection of the table of contents, to outline a social or political philosophy; nor is the book intended to be merely a vehicle for my observations on a variety of topics. My aim is to help to define a word, the word *culture*.

Just as a doctrine only needs to be defined after the appearance of some heresy, so a word does not need to receive this attention until it has come to be misused. I have observed with growing anxiety the career of this word *culture* during the past six or seven years. We may find it natural, and significant, that during a period of unparalleled destructiveness, this word should come to have an important role in the journalistic vocabulary. Its part is of course doubled by the word *civilisation*. I have made no attempt in this essay to determine the frontier between the meanings of these two words: for I came to the conclusion that any such attempt could only produce an artificial distinction, peculiar to the book, which the reader would have difficulty in retaining; and which, after closing the book, he would abandon with a sense of relief. We do use one word, frequently enough, in a context where the other would do as well; there are other contexts where one word obviously fits and the other does not; and I do not think that this need cause embarrassment. There are enough inevitable obstacles, in this discussion, without erecting unnecessary ones.

In August, 1945, there was published the text of a draft constitution for a "United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation." The purpose of this organisation was, in Article I, defined as follows:

> 1. To develop and maintain mutual understanding and appreciation of the life and culture, the arts, the humanities, and the sciences of the peoples of the world, as a basis for effective international organization and world peace.
> 2. To cooperate in extending and in making available to all peoples for the service of common human needs the world's full body of knowledge and culture, and in assuring its contribution to the economic stability, political security, and general well-being of the peoples of the world.[9]

I am not at the moment concerned to extract a meaning from these sentences: I only quote them to call attention to the word *culture*, and to suggest that before acting on such resolutions we should try to find out what this one word means. This is only one of innumerable instances which might be cited,

of the use of a word which nobody bothers to examine. In general, the word is used in two ways: by a kind of synechdoche, when the speaker has in mind one of the elements or evidences of culture – such as "art"; or, as in the passage just quoted, as a kind of emotional stimulant – or anaesthetic.[10*]

At the beginning of my first chapter I have endeavoured to distinguish and relate the three principal uses of the word: and to make the point, that when we use the term in one of these three ways we should do so in awareness of the others. I then try to expose the essential relation of culture to religion, and to make clear the limitations of the word *relation* as an expression of this "relation." The first important assertion is that no culture has appeared or developed except together with a religion: according to the point of view of the observer, the culture will appear to be the product of the religion, or the religion the product of the culture.

In the next three chapters I discuss what seem to me to be three important conditions for culture. The first of these is organic (not merely planned, but growing) structure, such as will foster the hereditary transmission of culture within a culture: and this requires the persistence of social classes. The second is the necessity that a culture should be analysable, geographically, into local cultures: this raises the problem of "regionalism." The third is the balance of unity and diversity in religion – that is, universality of doctrine with particularity of cult and devotion. The reader must keep in mind that I am not pretending to account for all the necessary conditions for a flourishing culture; I discuss three which have especially struck my attention.[11*] He must also remember that what I offer is not a set of directions for fabricating a culture. I do not say that by setting about to produce these, and any other additional conditions, we can confidently expect to improve our civilisation. I say only that, so far as my observation goes, you are unlikely to have a high civilisation where these conditions are absent.

The remaining two chapters of the book make some slight attempt to disentangle culture from politics and education.

I dare say that some readers will draw political inferences from this discussion: what is more likely is that particular minds will read into my text a confirmation or repudiation of their own political convictions and prejudices. The writer himself is not without political convictions and prejudices; but the imposition of them is no part of his present intention. What I try to say is this: here are what I believe to be essential conditions for the growth and for the survival of culture. If they conflict with any passionate faith of the reader – if, for instance, he finds it shocking that culture and

equalitarianism should conflict, if it seems monstrous to him that anyone should have "advantages of birth" – I do not ask him to change his faith, I merely ask him to stop paying lip-service to culture. If the reader says: "the state of affairs which I wish to bring about is *right* (or is *just*,[12*] or is *inevitable*); and if this must lead to a further deterioration of culture, we must accept that deterioration" – then I can have no quarrel with him. I might even, in some circumstances, feel obliged to support him. The effect of such a wave of honesty would be that the word *culture* would cease to be abused, cease to appear in contexts where it does not belong: and to rescue this word is the extreme of my ambition.

As things are, it is normal for anybody who advocates any social change, or any alteration of our political system, or any expansion of public education, or any development of social service, to claim confidently that it will lead to the improvement and increase of culture. Sometimes culture, or civilisation, is set in the forefront, and we are told that what we need, must have, and shall get, is a "new civilisation." In 1944 I read a symposium in *The Sunday Times* (November 31) in which Professor Harold Laski, or his headline writer, affirmed that we were fighting the late war for a "new civilisation." Mr. Laski at least asserted this:

> if it is agreed that these who seek to rebuild what Mr. Churchill likes to call "traditional" Britain have no hope of fulfilling that end, it follows that there must be a new Britain in a new civilisation.[13]

We might murmur "it is not agreed," but that would be to miss my point. Mr. Laski is right to this extent, that *if* we lose anything finally and irreparably, we must make do without it: but I think he meant to say something more than that.

Mr. Laski is, or was convinced that the particular political and social changes which he desires to bring about, and which he believes to be advantageous for society, will, because they are so radical, result in a new civilisation. That is quite conceivable: what we are not justified in concluding, with regard to his or any other changes in the social framework which anybody advocates, is that the "new civilisation" is itself desirable. For one thing, we can have no notion of what the new civilisation will be like: so many other causes operate than those we may have in mind, and the results of these and the others, operating together, are so incalculable, that we cannot imagine what it would *feel* like to live in that new civilisation. For another thing, the people who live in that new civilisation will, by the fact of belonging to it,

be different from ourselves, and they will be just as different from Mr. Laski. Every change we make is tending to bring about a new civilisation of the nature of which we are ignorant, and in which we should all of us be unhappy. A new civilisation is, in fact, coming into being all the time: the civilisation of the present day would seem very new indeed to any civilised man of the eighteenth century, and I cannot imagine the most ardent or radical reformer of that age taking much pleasure in the civilisation that would meet his eye now. All that a concern for civilisation can direct us to do, is to improve such civilisation as we have for we can imagine no other. On the other hand, there have always been people who have believed in particular changes as good in themselves, without worrying about the future of civilisation, and without finding it necessary to recommend their innovations by the specious glitter of unmeaning promises.

A new civilisation is always being made: the state of affairs that we enjoy today illustrates what happens to the aspirations of each age for a better one. The most important question that we can ask, is whether there is any permanent standard, by which we can compare one civilisation with another, and by which we can make some guess at the improvement or decline of our own. We have to admit, in comparing one civilisation with another, and in comparing the different stages of our own, that no one society and no one age of it realises all the values of civilisation. Not all of these values may be compatible with each other: what is at least as certain is that in realising some we lose the appreciation of others. Nevertheless, we can distinguish between higher and lower cultures; we can distinguish between advance and retrogression. We can assert with some confidence that our own period is one of decline; that the standards of culture are lower than they were fifty years ago; and that the evidences of this decline are visible in every department of human activity.[14*] I see no reason why the decay of culture should not proceed much further, and why we may not even anticipate a period, of some duration, of which it is possible to say that it will have *no* culture. Then culture will have to grow again from the soil; and when I say it must grow again from the soil, I do not mean that it will be brought into existence by any activity of political demagogues. The question asked by this essay, is whether there are any permanent conditions, in the absence of which no higher culture can be expected.

If we succeed even partially in answering this question, we must then put ourselves on guard against the delusion of trying to bring about these conditions *for the sake of* the improvement of our culture. For if any definite

conclusions emerge from this study, one of them is surely this, that culture is the one thing that we cannot deliberately aim at. It is the product of a variety of more or less harmonious activities, each pursued for its own sake: the artist must concentrate upon his canvas, the poet upon his typewriter, the civil servant upon the just settlement of particular problems as they present themselves upon his desk, each according to the situation in which he finds himself. Even if these conditions with which I am concerned, seem to the reader to represent desirable social aims, he must not leap to the conclusion that these aims can be fulfilled solely by deliberate organisation. A class division of society planned by an absolute authority would be artificial and intolerable; a decentralisation under central direction would be a contradiction; an ecclesiastical unity cannot be imposed in the hope that it will bring about unity of faith, and a religious diversity cultivated for its own sake would be absurd. The point at which we can arrive, is the recognition that these conditions of culture are "natural" to human beings; that although we can do little to encourage them, we can combat the intellectual errors and the emotional prejudices which stand in their way. For the rest, we should look for the improvement of society, as we seek our own individual improvement, in relatively minute particulars. We cannot say: "I shall make myself into a different person"; we can only say: "I will give up this bad habit, and endeavour to contract this good one." So of society we can only say: "We shall try to improve it in this respect or the other, where excess or defect is evident; we must try at the same time to embrace so much in our view, that we may avoid, in putting one thing right, putting something else wrong." Even this is to express an aspiration greater than we can achieve: for it is as much, or more, because of what we do piecemeal without understanding or foreseeing the consequences, that the culture of one age differs from that of its predecessor.

CHAPTER I
The Three Senses of "Culture"

The term *culture* has different associations according to whether we have in mind the development of an *individual*, of a *group* or *class*, or of a *whole society*. It is a part of my thesis that the culture of the individual is dependent upon the culture of a group or class, and that the culture of the group or class is dependent upon the culture of the whole society to which that group or class belongs. Therefore it is the culture of the society that is fundamental,

and it is the meaning of the term "culture" in relation to the whole society that should be examined first. When the term "culture" is applied to the manipulation of lower organisms – to the work of the bacteriologist or the *agri*culturalist – the meaning is clear enough, for we can have unanimity in respect of the ends to be attained, and we can agree when we have or have not attained them. When it is applied to the improvement of the human mind and spirit, we are less likely to agree as to what culture is. The term itself, as signifying something to be consciously aimed at in human affairs, has not a long history. As something to be achieved by deliberate effort, "culture" is relatively intelligible when we are concerned with the self-cultivation of the individual, whose culture is seen against the background of the culture of the group and of the society. The culture of the group also, has a definite meaning in contrast to the less developed culture of the mass of society. The difference between the three applications of the term can be best apprehended by asking how far, in relation to the individual, the group, and society as a whole the *conscious aim to achieve culture* has any meaning. A good deal of confusion could be avoided, if we refrained from setting before the group, what can be the aim only of the individual; and before society as a whole, what can be the aim only of a group.

The general, or anthropological sense of the word *culture*, as used for instance by E. B. Tylor in the title of his book *Primitive Culture*, has flourished independently of the other senses:[15] but if we are considering highly developed societies, and especially our own contemporary society, we have to consider the relationship of the three senses. At this point anthropology passes over into sociology. Amongst men of letters and moralists, it has been usual to discuss culture in the first two senses, and especially the first, without relation to the third. The most easily remembered example of this selection is Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*.[16] Arnold is concerned primarily with the individual and the "perfection" at which he should aim. It is true that in his famous classification of "Barbarians, Philistines, Populace" he concerns himself with a critique of classes; but his criticism is confined to an indictment of these classes for their shortcomings, and does not proceed to consider what should be the proper function or "perfection" of each class.[17] The effect, therefore, is to exhort the individual who would attain the peculiar kind of "perfection" which Arnold calls "culture," to rise superior to the limitations of any class, rather than to realise its highest attainable ideals.

The impression of thinness which Arnold's "culture" conveys to a modern reader is partly due to the absence of social background to his picture.

But it is also due, I think, to his failure to take account of another way in which we use the word "culture," besides the three already mentioned. There are several kinds of attainment which we may have in mind in different contexts. We may be thinking of refinement of manners – or *urbanity* and *civility*: if so, we shall think first of a social class, and of the superior individual as representative of the best of that class. We may be thinking of *learning* and a close acquaintance with the accumulated wisdom of the past: if so, our man of culture is the scholar. We may be thinking of *philosophy* in the widest sense – an interest in, and some ability to manipulate, abstract ideas: if so, we may mean the intellectual (recognising the fact that this term is now used very loosely, to comprehend many persons not conspicuous for strength of intellect). Or we may be thinking of *the arts*: if so, we mean the artist and the amateur or dilettante. But what we seldom have in mind is all of these things at the same time. We do not find, for instance, that an understanding of music or painting figures explicitly in Arnold's description of the cultured man: yet no one will deny that these attainments play a part in culture.

If we look at the several activities of culture listed in the preceding paragraph, we must conclude that no perfection in any one of them, to the exclusion of the others, can confer culture on anybody. We know that good manners, without education, intellect or sensibility to the arts, tend towards mere automatism; that learning without good manners or sensibility is pedantry; that intellectual ability without the more human attributes is admirable only in the same way as the brilliance of a child chess prodigy; and that the arts without intellectual context are vanity. And if we do not find culture in any one of these perfections alone, so we must not expect any one person to be accomplished in all of them; we shall come to infer that the wholly cultured individual is a phantasm; and we shall look for culture, not in any individual or in any one group of individuals, but more and more widely; and we are driven in the end to find it in the pattern of the society as a whole. This seems to me a very obvious reflection: but it is frequently overlooked. People are always ready to consider themselves persons of culture, on the strength of one proficiency, when they are not only lacking in others, but blind to those they lack. An artist of any kind, even a very great artist, is not for this reason alone a man of culture: artists are not only often insensitive to other arts than those which they practise, but sometimes have very bad manners or meagre intellectual gifts. The person who contributes to culture, however important his contribution may be, is not always a "cultured person."

It does not follow from this that there is no meaning in speaking of the culture of an individual, or of a group or class. We only mean that the culture of the individual cannot be isolated from that of the group, and that the culture of the group cannot be abstracted from that of the whole society; and that our notion of "perfection" must take all three senses of "culture" into account at once. Nor does it follow that in a society, of whatever grade of culture, the groups concerned with each activity of culture will be distinct and exclusive: on the contrary, it is only by an overlapping and sharing of interests, by participation and mutual appreciation, that the cohesion necessary for culture can obtain. A religion requires not only a body of priests who know what they are doing, but a body of worshippers who know what is being done.

It is obvious that among the more primitive communities the several activities of culture are inextricably interwoven. The Dyak who spends the better part of a season in shaping, carving and painting his barque of the peculiar design required for the annual ritual of head-hunting, is exercising several cultural activities at once – of art and religion, as well as of amphibious warfare.[18] As civilisation becomes more complex, greater occupational specialisation evinces itself: in the "stone age" New Hebrides, Mr. John Layard says, certain islands specialise in particular arts and crafts, exchanging their wares and displaying their accomplishments to the reciprocal satisfaction of the members of the archipelago.[19] But while the individuals of a tribe, or of a group of islands or villages, may have separate functions – of which the most peculiar are those of the king and the witch-doctor – it is only at a much further stage that religion, science, politics and art become abstractly conceived apart from each other. And just as the functions of individuals become hereditary, and hereditary function hardens into class or caste distinction, and class distinction leads to conflict, so do religion, politics, science and art reach a point at which there is conscious struggle between them for autonomy or dominance. This friction is, at some stages and in some situations, highly creative: how far it is the result, and how far the cause, of increased consciousness need not here be considered. The tension within the society may become also a tension within the mind of the more conscious individual: the clash of duties in *Antigone*, which is not simply a clash between piety and civil obedience, or between religion and politics, but between conflicting laws within what is still a religious-political complex, represents a very advanced stage of civilisation: for the conflict must have meaning in the audience's experience before it can be made articulate by the

dramatist and receive from the audience the response which the dramatist's art requires.[20]

As a society develops towards functional complexity and differentiation, we may expect the emergence of several cultural levels: in short, the culture of the class or group will present itself. It will not, I think, be disputed that in any future society, as in every civilised society of the past, there must be these different levels. I do not think that the most ardent champions of social equality dispute this: the difference of opinion turns on whether the transmission of group culture must be by inheritance – whether each cultural level must propagate itself – or whether it can be hoped that some mechanism of selection will be found, so that every individual shall in due course take his place at the highest cultural level for which his natural aptitudes qualify him. What is pertinent at this point is that the emergence of more highly cultured groups does not leave the rest of society unaffected: it is itself part of a process in which the whole society changes. And it is certain – and especially obvious when we turn our attention to the arts – that as new values appear, and as thought, sensibility and expression become more elaborate, some earlier values vanish. That is only to say that you cannot expect to have all stages of development at once; that a civilisation cannot simultaneously produce great folk poetry at one cultural level and *Paradise Lost* at another. Indeed, the one thing that time is ever sure to bring about is the loss: gain or compensation is almost always conceivable but never certain.

While it appears that progress in civilisation will bring into being more specialised culture groups, we must not expect this development to be unattended by perils. Cultural disintegration may ensue upon cultural specialisation: and it is the most radical disintegration that a society can suffer. It is not the only kind, or it is not the only aspect under which disintegration can be studied; but, whatever be cause or effect, the disintegration of culture is the most serious and the most difficult to repair. (Here, of course, we are emphasising the culture of the whole society.) It must not be confused with another malady, ossification into caste, as in Hindu India, of what may have been originally only a hierarchy of functions: even though it is possible that both maladies have some hold upon British society to-day. Cultural disintegration is present when two or more strata so separate that these become in effect distinct cultures; and also when culture at the upper group level breaks into fragments each of which represents one cultural activity alone. If I am not mistaken, some disintegration of the classes in which culture is, or should be, most highly developed, has already taken place in

western society – as well as some cultural separation between one level of society and another. Religious thought and practice, philosophy and art, all tend to become isolated areas cultivated by groups in no communication with each other. The artistic sensibility is impoverished by its divorce from the religious sensibility, the religious by its separation from the artistic; and the vestige of *manners* may be left to a few survivors of a vanishing class who, their sensibility untrained by either religion or art and their minds unfurnished with the material for witty conversation, will have no context in their lives to give value to their behaviour. And deterioration on the higher levels is a matter of concern, not only to the group which is visibly affected, but to the whole people.

The causes of a total decline of culture are as complex as the evidence of it is various. Some may be found in the accounts given, by various specialists, of the causes of more readily apprehended social ailments for which we must continue to seek specific remedies. Yet we become more and more aware of the extent to which the baffling problem of "culture" underlies the problems of the relation of every part of the world to every other. When we concern ourselves with the relation of the great nations to each other; the relation of the great to the small nations;[21]* the relation of intermixed "communities," as in India, to each other; the relation of parent nations to those which have originated as colonies; the relation of the colonist to the native; the relation between peoples of such areas as the West Indies, where compulsion or economic inducement has brought together large numbers of different races:[22] behind all these perplexing questions, involving decisions to be made by many men every day, there is the question of what culture is, and the question whether it is anything that we can control or deliberately influence. These questions confront us whenever we devise a theory, or frame a policy, of education. If we take culture seriously, we see that a people does not need merely enough to eat (though even that is more than we seem able to ensure) but a proper and particular *cuisine*: one symptom of the decline of culture in Britain is indifference to the art of preparing food.[23] Culture may even be described simply as that which makes life worth living. And it is what justifies other peoples and other generations in saying, when they contemplate the remains and the influence of an extinct civilisation, that it was *worth while* for that civilisation to have existed.

I have already asserted, in my introduction, that no culture can appear or develop except in relation to a religion. But the use of the term *relation* here may easily lead us into error. The facile assumption of a relationship between

culture and religion is perhaps the most fundamental weakness of Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*. Arnold gives the impression that Culture (as he uses the term) is something more comprehensive than religion; that the latter is no more than a necessary element, supplying ethical formation and some emotional colour, to Culture which is the ultimate value.

It may have struck the reader that what I have said about the development of culture, and about the dangers of disintegration when a culture has reached a highly developed stage, may apply also in the history of religion. The development of culture and the development of religion, in a society uninfluenced from without, cannot be clearly isolated from each other: and it will depend upon the bias of the particular observer, whether a refinement of culture is held to be the cause of progress in religion, or whether a progress in religion is held to be the cause of a refinement of the culture. What perhaps influences us towards treating religion and culture as two different things is the history of the penetration of Graeco-Roman culture by the Christian Faith – a penetration which had profound effects both upon that culture and upon the course of development taken by Christian thought and practice. But the culture with which primitive Christianity came into contact (as well as that of the environment in which Christianity took its origins) was itself a religious culture in decline. So, while we believe that the same religion may inform a variety of cultures, we may ask whether any culture could come into being, or maintain itself, without a religious basis. We may go further and ask whether what we call the culture, and what we call the religion, of a people are not different aspects of the same thing: the culture being, essentially, the incarnation (so to speak) of the religion of a people. To put the matter in this way may throw light on my reservations concerning the word *relation*.

As a society develops, a greater number of degrees and kinds of religious capacity and function – as well as of other capacities and functions – will make their appearance. It is to be noticed that in some religions the differentiation has been so wide that there have resulted in effect two religions – one for the populace and one for the adepts. The evils of "two nations" in religion are obvious. Christianity has resisted this malady better than Hinduism. The schisms of the sixteenth century, and the subsequent multiplication of sects, can be studied either as the history of division of religious thought, or as a struggle between opposing social groups – as the variation of doctrine, or as the disintegration of European culture. Yet, while these wide divergences of belief on the same level are lamentable, the Faith can,

and must, find room for many degrees of intellectual, imaginative and emotional receptivity to the same doctrines, just as it can embrace many variations of order and ritual. The Christian Faith also, psychologically considered – as systems of beliefs and attitudes in particular embodied minds – will have a history: though it would be a gross error to suppose that the sense in which it can be spoken of as developing and changing, implies the possibility of greater sanctity or divine illumination becoming available to human beings through collective progress. (We do not assume that there is, over a long period, progress even in art, or that "primitive" art is, as art, necessarily inferior to the more sophisticated.) But one of the features of development, whether we are taking the religious or the cultural point of view, is the appearance of *scepticism* – by which, of course, I do not mean infidelity or destructiveness (still less the unbelief which is due to mental sloth) but the habit of examining evidence and the capacity for delayed decision. Scepticism is a highly civilised trait, though, when it declines into pyrrhonism, it is one of which civilisation can die. Where scepticism is strength, pyrrhonism is weakness: for we need not only the strength to defer a decision, but the strength to make one.

The conception of culture and religion as being, when each term is taken in the right context, different aspects of the same thing, is one which requires a good deal of explanation. But I should like to suggest first, that it provides us with the means of combating two complementary errors. The one more widely held is that culture can be preserved, extended and developed in the absence of religion. This error may be held by the Christian in common with the infidel, and its proper refutation would require an historical analysis of considerable refinement, because the truth is not immediately apparent, and may seem even to be contradicted by appearances: a culture may linger on, and indeed produce some of its most brilliant artistic and other successes after the religious faith has fallen into decay. The other error is the belief that the preservation and maintenance of religion need not reckon with the preservation and maintenance of culture: a belief which may even lead to the rejection of the products of culture as frivolous obstructions to the spiritual life. To be in a position to reject this error, as with the other, requires us to take a distant view; to refuse to accept the conclusion, when the culture that we see is a culture in decline, that culture is something to which we can afford to remain indifferent. And I must add that to see the unity of culture and religion in this way neither implies that all the products of art can be accepted uncritically, nor provides a criterion by which everybody

can immediately distinguish between them. Aesthetic sensibility must be extended into spiritual perception, and spiritual perception must be extended into aesthetic sensibility and disciplined taste before we are qualified to pass judgment upon decadence or diabolism or nihilism in art. To judge a work of art by artistic or by religious standards, to judge a religion by religious or artistic standards should come in the end to the same thing: though it is an end at which no individual can arrive.

The way of looking at culture and religion which I have been trying to adumbrate is so difficult that I am not sure I grasp it myself except in flashes, or that I comprehend all its implications. It is also one which involves the risk of error at every moment, by some unperceived alteration of the meaning which either term has when the two are coupled in this way, into some meaning which either may have when taken alone. It holds good only in the sense in which people are unconscious of both their culture and their religion. Anyone with even the slightest religious consciousness must be afflicted from time to time by the contrast between his religious faith and his behaviour; anyone with the taste that *individual* or *group* culture confers must be aware of values which he cannot call religious. And both "religion" and "culture," besides meaning different things from each other, should mean for the individual and for the group something towards which they strive, not merely something which they possess. Yet there is an aspect in which we can see a religion as the *whole way of life* of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night and even in sleep, and that way of life is also its culture. And at the same time we must recognise that when this identification is complete, it means in actual societies both an inferior culture and an inferior religion. A universal religion is at least potentially higher than one which any race or nation claims exclusively for itself; and a culture realising a religion also realised in other cultures is at least potentially a higher culture than one which has a religion exclusively to itself. From one point of view we may identify: from another, we must separate.

Taking now the point of view of identification, the reader must remind himself as the author has constantly to do, of how much is here embraced by the term *culture*. It includes all the characteristic activities and interests of a people: Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the twelfth of August, a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth-century Gothic churches and the music of Elgar.[24] The reader can make his own list.

And then we have to face the strange idea that what is part of our culture is also a part of our *lived* religion.

We must not think of our culture as completely unified – my list above was designed to avoid that suggestion. And the actual religion of no European people has ever been purely Christian, or purely anything else. There are always bits and traces of more primitive faiths, more or less absorbed; there is always the tendency towards parasitic beliefs; there are always perversions, as when patriotism, which pertains to natural religion and is therefore licit and even encouraged by the Church, becomes exaggerated into a caricature of itself. And it is only too easy for a people to maintain contradictory beliefs and to propitiate mutually antagonistic powers.

The reflection that what we believe is not merely what we formulate and subscribe to, but that behaviour is also belief, and that even the most conscious and developed of us live also at the level on which belief and behaviour cannot be distinguished, is one that may, once we allow our imagination to play upon it, be very disconcerting. It gives an importance to our most trivial pursuits, to the occupation of our every minute, which we cannot contemplate long without the horror of nightmare. When we consider the quality of the integration required for the full cultivation of the spiritual life, we must keep in mind the possibility of grace and the exemplars of sanctity in order not to sink into despair. And when we consider the problem of evangelisation, of the development of a Christian society, we have reason to quail. To believe that *we* are religious people and that other people are without religion is a simplification which approaches distortion. To reflect that from one point of view religion is culture, and from another point of view culture is religion, can be very disturbing. To ask whether the people have not a religion already, in which Derby Day and the dog track play their parts, is embarrassing; so is the suggestion that part of the religion of the higher ecclesiastic is gaiters and the Athenaeum.[25] It is inconvenient for Christians to find that as Christians they do not believe enough, and that on the other hand they, with everybody else, believe in too many things: yet this is a consequence of reflecting, that bishops are a part of English culture, and horses and dogs are a part of English religion.

It is commonly assumed that there is culture, but that it is the property of a small section of society; and from this assumption it is usual to proceed to one of two conclusions: either that culture can only be the concern of a

small minority, and that therefore there is no place for it in the society of the future; or that in the society of the future the culture which has been the possession of the few must be put at the disposal of everybody. This assumption and its consequences remind us of the Puritan antipathy to monasticism and the ascetic life: for just as a culture which is only accessible to the few is now deprecated, so was the enclosed and contemplative life condemned by extreme Protestantism, and celibacy regarded with almost as much abhorrence as perversion.

In order to apprehend the theory of religion and culture which I have endeavoured to set forth in this chapter, we have to try to avoid the two alternative errors: that of regarding religion and culture as two separate things between which there is a *relation*, and that of *identifying* religion and culture. I spoke at one point of the culture of a people as an *incarnation* of its religion; and while I am aware of the temerity of employing such an exalted term, I cannot think of any other which would convey so well the intention to avoid *relation* on the one hand and *identification* on the other. The truth, partial truth, or falsity of a religion neither consists in the cultural achievements of the peoples professing that religion, nor submits to being exactly tested by them. For what a people may be said to believe, as shown by its behaviour, is, as I have said, always a great deal more and a great deal less than its professed faith in its purity. Furthermore, a people whose culture has been formed together with a religion of partial truth, may live that religion (at some period in its history, at least) with greater fidelity than another people which has a truer light. It is only when we imagine our culture as it ought to be, if our society were a really Christian society, that we can dare to speak of Christian culture as the highest culture; it is only by referring to all the phases of this culture, which has been the culture of Europe, that we can affirm that it is the highest culture that the world has ever known. In comparing our culture as it is today, with that of non-Christian peoples, we must be prepared to find that ours is in one respect or another inferior. I do not overlook the possibility that Britain, if it consummated its apostasy by reforming itself according to the prescriptions of some inferior or materialistic religion, might blossom into a culture more brilliant than that we can show to-day. That would not be evidence that the new religion was true, and that Christianity was false. It would merely prove that any religion, while it lasts, and on its own level, gives an apparent meaning to life, provides the frame-work for a culture, and protects the mass of humanity from boredom and despair.

CHAPTER II
The Class and the Élite

It would appear, according to the account of levels of culture put forward in the previous chapter, that among the more primitive societies, the higher types exhibit more marked differentiations of function amongst their members than the lower types.[26*] At a higher stage still, we find that some functions are more honoured than others, and this division promotes the development of *classes*, in which higher honour and higher privilege are accorded, not merely to the person as functionary but as member of the class. And the class itself possesses a function, that of maintaining that part of the total culture of the society which pertains to that class. We have to try to keep in mind, that in a healthy society this maintenance of a particular level of culture is to the benefit, not merely of the class which maintains it, but of the society as a whole. Awareness of this fact will prevent us from supposing that the culture of a "higher" class is something superfluous to society as a whole, or to the majority, and from supposing that it is something which ought to be shared equally by all other classes. It should also remind the "higher" class, in so far as any such exists, that the survival of the culture in which it is particularly interested is dependent upon the health of the culture of the people.

It has now become a commonplace of contemporary thinking, that a society thus articulated is not the highest type to which we may aspire; but that it is indeed in the nature of things for a progressive society eventually to overcome these divisions, and that it is also within the power of our conscious direction, and therefore a duty incumbent upon us, to bring about a classless society. But while it is generally supposed that class, in any sense which maintains associations of the past, will disappear, it is now the opinion of some of the most advanced minds that some qualitative differences between individuals must still be recognised, and that the superior individuals must be formed into suitable groups, endowed with appropriate powers, and perhaps with varied emoluments and honours. Those groups, formed of individuals apt for powers of government and administration, will direct the public life of the nation; the individuals composing them will be spoken of as "leaders." There will be groups concerned with art, and groups concerned with science, and groups concerned with philosophy, as well as groups consisting of men of action: and these groups are what we call élites.

It is obvious, that while in the present state of society there is found the voluntary association of like-minded individuals, and association based upon

common material interest, or common occupation or profession, the élites of the future will differ in one important respect from any that we know: they will replace the classes of the past, whose positive functions they will assume. This transformation is not always explicitly stated. There are some philosophers who regard class divisions as intolerable, and others who regard them merely as moribund. The latter may simply ignore class, in their design for an élite-governed society, and say that the élites will "be drawn from all sections of society." But it would seem that as we perfect the means for identifying at an early age, educating for their future role, and settling into positions of authority, the individuals who will form the élites, all former class distinctions will become a mere shadow or vestige, and the only social distinction of rank will be between the élites and the rest of the community, unless, as may happen, there is to be an order of precedence and prestige amongst the several élites themselves.

However moderately and unobtrusively the doctrine of élites is put, it implies a radical transformation of society. Superficially, it appears to aim at no more than what we must all desire – that all positions in society should be occupied by those who are best fitted to exercise the functions of the positions. We have all observed individuals occupying situations in life for which neither their character nor their intellect qualified them, and so placed only through nominal education, or birth or consanguinity. No honest man but is vexed by such a spectacle. But the doctrine of élites implies a good deal more than the rectification of such injustice. It posits an *atomic* view of society.

The philosopher whose views on the subject of élites deserve the closest attention, both for their own value and because of the influence they exert, is the late Dr. Karl Mannheim. It is, for that matter, Dr. Mannheim who has founded the fortunes, in this country, of the term élite. I must remark that Dr. Mannheim's description of culture is different from that given in the previous chapter of this essay. He says (*Man and Society*, page 81):

> [A] sociological investigation of culture in liberal society must begin with the life of those who create culture, i.e. the intelligentsia and their position within society as a whole.[27]

According to the account which I have given, a "culture" is conceived as the creation of the society as a whole: being, from another aspect, that which makes it a society. It is not the creation of any one part of that society. The function of what Dr. Mannheim would call the culture-creating groups,

according to my account, would be rather to bring about a further development of the culture in organic complexity: culture at a more conscious level, but still the same culture. This higher level of culture must be thought of both as valuable in itself, and as enriching of the lower levels: thus the movement of culture would proceed in a kind of cycle, each class nourishing the others.

This is, already, a difference of some importance. My next observation is that Dr. Mannheim is concerned rather with élites than with an élite.

> We may distinguish (he says, in *Man and Society*, page 82) the following main types of élites: the political, the organizing, the intellectual, the artistic, the moral, and the religious. Whereas the political and organizing élites aim at integrating a great number of individual wills, it is the function of the intellectual, aesthetic, and moral-religious élites to sublimate those psychic energies which society, in the daily struggle for existence, does not fully exhaust. [82-83]

This departmentalisation of élites already exists, to some extent; and to some extent it is a necessary and a good thing. But, so far as it can be observed to exist, it is not *altogether* a good thing. I have suggested elsewhere that a growing weakness of our culture has been the increasing isolation of élites from each other, so that the political, the philosophical, the artistic, the scientific, are separated to the great loss of each of them, not merely through the arrest of any general circulation of ideas, but through the lack of those contacts and mutual influences at a less conscious level, which are perhaps even more important than ideas. The problem of the formation, preservation and development of the élites is therefore also the problem of the formation, preservation and development of *the* élite, a problem upon which Dr. Mannheim does not touch.

As an introduction to this problem, I must draw attention to another difference between my view and that of Dr. Mannheim. He observes, in a statement with which I agree (85):[28†]

> The crisis of culture in liberal-democratic society is due, in the first place, to the fact that the fundamental social processes, which previously favoured the development of the culturally creative élites, now have the opposite effect, i.e. have become obstacles to the forming of élites because wider sections of the population take an active part in cultural activities.

I cannot, of course, admit the last clause of this sentence as it stands. According to my view of culture, the whole of the population *should* "take

an active part in cultural activities" – not all in the same activities or on the same level. What this clause means, in my terms, is that an increasing proportion of the population is concerned with group culture. This comes about, I think Dr. Mannheim would agree, through the gradual alteration of the class-structure. But at this point it seems to me that Dr. Mannheim begins to confuse élite with *class*. For he says (89):

> If one calls to mind the essential forms of selecting élites, which up to the present have appeared on the historical scene, three principles can be distinguished: selection on the basis of *blood*, *property*, and *achievement*. Aristocratic society, especially after it had entrenched itself, chose its élites primarily on the blood principle. Bourgeois society gradually introduced, as a supplement, the principle of wealth, a principle which also obtained for the intellectual élite, inasmuch as education was more or less available only to the offspring of the well-to-do. It is, of course, true that the principle of achievement was combined with the two other principles in earlier periods, but it is the important contribution of modern democracy as long as it is rigorous, that the achievement principle increasingly tends to become the criterion of social success.

I am ready to accept, in a rough and ready way, this account of three historical periods. But I would remark that we are here not concerned with élites but with *classes* or, more precisely, with the evolution from a class to a classless society. It seems to me that at the stage of the sharpest division into classes we can distinguish an élite also. Are we to believe that the artists of the middle ages were all men of noble rank, or that the hierarchy and the statesmen were all selected according to their pedigrees?

I do not think that this is what Dr. Mannheim wishes us to believe; but I think that he is confusing the élites with the dominant section of society which the élites served, from which they took their colour, and into which some of their individual members were recruited. The general scheme of the transition of society, in the last five hundred years or so, is usually accepted, and I have no interest in questioning it. I would only propose one qualification. At the stage of dominance of *bourgeois* society (I think it would be better to say, for this country, "upper middle class society") there is a difference applying particularly to England. However powerful it was – for its power is now commonly said to be passing – it would not have been what it was, without the existence of a class above it, from which it drew some of its ideals and some of its criteria, and to the condition of which its more

ambitious members aspired. This gives it a difference in kind from the aristocratic society which preceded it, and from the mass-society which is expected to follow it.

I now come to another statement in Dr. Mannheim's discussion, which seems to me wholly true.[29†] His intellectual integrity prevents him from dissimulating the gloom of our present position; but he succeeds, so far as I can judge, in communicating to most of his readers a feeling of active hopefulness, by infecting them with his own passionate faith in the possibilities of "planning." Yet he says quite clearly:

> We have no clear idea how the selection of élites would work in an open mass society in which only the principle of achievement mattered. It is possible that in such a society, the succession of the élites would take place much too rapidly and social continuity which is essentially due to the slow and gradual broadening of the influence of the dominant groups would be lacking in it.[30*] [91]

This raises a problem of the first importance to my present discussion, with which I do not think Dr. Mannheim has dealt in any detail: that of the *transmission of culture*.

When we are concerned with the history of certain parts of culture, such as the history of art, or of literature, or of philosophy, we naturally isolate a particular class of phenomena; though there has been a movement, which has produced books of interest and value, to relate these subjects more closely to a general social history. But even such accounts are usually only the history of one class of phenomena interpreted in the light of the history of another class of phenomena and, like that of Dr. Mannheim, tend to take a more limited view of culture than that adopted here. What we have to consider is the parts played by the élite and by the class in the transmission of culture from one generation to the next.

We must remind ourselves of the danger, mentioned in the previous chapter, of identifying culture with the *sum* of distinct cultural activities; and if we avoid this identification we shall also decline to identify our group culture with the sum of the activities of Dr. Mannheim's élites. The anthropologist may study the social system, the economics, the arts, and the religion of a particular tribe, he may even study their psychological peculiarities: but it is not merely by observing in detail all of these manifestations, and grasping them together, that he will approach to an understanding of the culture. For to understand the culture is to understand the people,

and this means an imaginative understanding. Such understanding can never be complete: either it is abstract – and the essence escapes – or else it is *lived*; and in so far as it is *lived*, the student will tend to identify himself so completely with the people whom he studies, that he will lose the point of view from which it was worth while and possible to study it. Understanding involves an area more extensive than that of which one can be conscious; one cannot be outside and inside at the same time. What we ordinarily mean by understanding of another people, of course, is an approximation towards understanding which stops short at the point at which the student would begin to lose some essential of his own culture. The man who, in order to understand the inner world of a cannibal tribe, has partaken of the practice of cannibalism, has probably gone too far: he can never quite be one of his own folk again.[31*]

I have raised this question, however, solely in support of my contention that culture is not merely the sum of several activities, but a *way of life*. Now the specialist of genius, who may be fully qualified on the ground of his vocational attainment for membership of one of Dr. Mannheim's élites, may very well not be one of the "cultured persons" representative of group culture. As I have said before, he may be only a highly valued contributor to it. Yet group culture, as observable in the past, has never been co-extensive with class, whether an aristocracy or an upper middle class. A very large number of members of these classes always have been conspicuously deficient in "culture." I think that in the past the repository of this culture has been *the* élite, the major part of which was drawn from the dominant class of the time, constituting the primary consumers of the work of thought and art produced by the minority members, who will have originated from various classes, including that class itself. The units of this majority will, some of them, be individuals; others will be families. But the individuals from the dominant class who compose the nucleus of the cultural élite must not thereby be cut off from the class to which they belong, for without their membership of that class they would not have their part to play. It is their function, in relation to the producers, to transmit the culture which they have inherited; just as it is their function, in relation to the rest of their class, to keep it from ossification. It is the function of the class as a whole to preserve and communicate standards of *manners* – which are a vital element in group culture.[32*] It is the function of the superior members and superior families to preserve the group culture, as it is the function of the producers to alter it.

In an élite composed of individuals who find their way into it solely for their individual pre-eminence, the differences of background will be so great, that they will be united only by their common interests, and separated by everything else. An élite must therefore be attached to *some* class, whether higher or lower: but so long as there are classes at all it is likely to be the dominant class that attracts this élite to itself. What would happen in a classless society – which is much more difficult to envisage than people think – brings us into the area of conjecture. There are, however, some guesses which seem to me worth venturing.

The primary channel of transmission of culture is the family: no man wholly escapes from the kind, or wholly surpasses the degree, of culture which he acquired from his early environment. It would not do to suggest that this can be the *only* channel of transmission: in a society of any complexity it is supplemented and continued by other conduits of tradition. Even in relatively primitive societies this is so. In more civilised communities of specialised activities, in which not all the sons would follow the occupation of their father, the apprentice (ideally, at least) did not merely serve his master, and did not merely learn from him as one would learn at a technical school – he became assimilated into a way of life which went with that particular trade or craft; and perhaps the lost secret of the craft is this, that not merely a skill but an entire way of life was transmitted. Culture – distinguishable from knowledge about culture – was transmitted by the older universities: young men have profited there who have been profitless students, and who have acquired no taste for learning, or for Gothic architecture, or for college ritual and form. I suppose that something of the same sort is transmitted also by societies of the masonic type: for initiation is an introduction into a way of life, of however restricted viability, received from the past and to be perpetuated in the future. But by far the most important channel of transmission of culture remains the family: and when family life fails to play its part, we must expect our culture to deteriorate. Now the family is an institution of which nearly everybody speaks well: but it is advisable to remember that this is a term that may vary in extension. In the present age it means little more than the living members. Even of living members, it is a rare exception when an advertisement depicts a large family or three generations: the usual family on the hoardings consists of two parents and one or two young children. What is held up for admiration is not devotion to a family, but personal affection between the members of it: and the smaller the family, the more easily can this personal affection be sentimentalised.

But when I speak of the family, I have in mind a bond which embraces a longer period of time than this: a piety towards the dead, however obscure, and a solicitude for the unborn, however remote. Unless this reverence for past and future is cultivated in the home, it can never be more than a verbal convention in the community. Such an interest in the past is different from the vanities and pretensions of genealogy; such a responsibility for the future is different from that of the builder of social programmes.

I should say then that in a vigorous society there will be present[33†] both class and élite, with some overlapping and constant interaction between them. An élite, if it is a governing élite, and so far as the natural impulse to pass on to one's offspring both power and prestige is not artificially checked, will tend to establish itself as a class – it is this metamorphosis, I think, which leads to what appears to me an oversight on the part of Dr. Mannheim. But an élite which thus transforms itself tends to lose its function as élite, for the qualities by which the original members won their position, will not all be transmitted equally to their descendants. On the other hand, we have to consider what would be the consequence when the converse took place, and we had a society in which the functions of class were assumed by élites. Dr. Mannheim seems to have believed that this will happen; he showed himself, as a passage which I have quoted shows, aware of the dangers; and he does not appear to have been ready to propose definite safeguards against them.

The situation of a society without classes, and dominated exclusively by élites is, I submit, one about which we have no reliable evidence. By such a society, I suppose we must mean one in which every individual starts without advantage or handicap; and in which, by some mechanism set up by the best designers of such machinery, everybody will find his way, or be directed, to that station of life which he is best fitted to fill, and every position will be occupied by the man or woman best fitted for it. Of course, not even the most sanguine would expect the system to work as well as that: if, by and large, it seemed to come nearer to putting the right people in the right places than any previous system, we should all be satisfied. When I say "dominated," rather than "governed" by élites, I mean that such a society must not be content to be *governed* by the right people: it must see that the ablest artists and architects rise to the top, influence taste, and execute the important public commissions; it must do the same by the other arts and by science; and above all, perhaps, it must be such that the ablest minds will find expression in speculative thought. The system must not only do all this for society in

a particular situation – it must *go on* doing it, generation after generation. It would be folly to deny that in a particular phase of a country's development, and *for a limited purpose*, an élite can do a very good job. It may, by expelling a previous governing group, which in contrast to itself may be a *class*, save or reform or revitalise the national life. Such things have happened. But we have very little evidence about the perpetuation of government by élite, and such as we have is unsatisfactory. A considerable time must elapse before we can draw any illustration from Russia. Russia is a rude and vigorous country; it is also a very big country; and it will need a long period of peace and internal development. Three things may happen. Russia may show us how a stable government and a flourishing culture can be transmitted only through élites; it may lapse into oriental lethargy; or the governing élite may follow the course of other governing élites and become a governing class. Nor can we rely upon any evidence from the United States of America. The real revolution in that country was not what is called the Revolution in the history books, but is a consequence of the Civil War; after which arose a Plutocratic élite; after which the expansion and material development of the country was accelerated; after which was swollen that stream of mixed immigration, bringing (or rather multiplying) the danger of development into a *caste* system[34]* which has not yet been quite dispelled. For the sociologist, the evidence from America is not yet ripe. Our other evidence for government by élite comes chiefly from France. A governing class, which, during a long period in which the Throne was all-powerful, had ceased to govern, was reduced to the ordinary level of citizenship. Modern France has had no governing class: her political life in the Third Republic, whatever else we may say of it, was *unsettled*. And here we may remark that when a dominant class, however badly it has performed its function, is forcibly removed, its function is not wholly taken over by any other. The "flight of the wild geese" is perhaps a symbol of the harm that England has done to Ireland – more serious, from this point of view, than the massacres of Cromwell, or any of the grievances which the Irish most gladly recall.[35] It may be, too, that England has done more harm to Wales and Scotland by gently attracting their upper classes to certain public schools, than by the wrongs (some real, some imaginary, some misunderstood) voiced by their respective nationalists. But here again, I wish to reserve judgment about Russia. That country, at the time of its revolution, may still have been at so early a stage of its development, that the removal of its upper class may prove not only not to have arrested that development but to have stimulated it.

There are, however, some grounds for believing that the elimination of an upper class at a more developed stage can be a disaster for a country: and most certainly when that removal is due to the intervention of another nation.

I have, in the preceding paragraphs, been speaking mainly of the "governing class" and the "governing élite." But I must remind the reader again that in concerning ourselves with class *versus* élite, we are concerned with the total culture of a country, and that involves a good deal more than government. We can yield ourselves with some confidence to a governing élite, as the republican Romans surrendered power to dictators, so long as we have in view a *defined purpose* in a crisis – and a crisis may last a long time. This limited purpose also makes it possible to choose the élite, for we know what we are choosing it for. But, if we are looking for a way to select the right people to constitute every élite, for an indefinite future, by what mechanism are we to do this? If our "purpose" is only to get the best people, in every walk of life, to the top, we lack a criterion of who are the best people; or, if we impose a criterion, it will have an oppressive effect upon novelty. The new work of genius, whether in art, science or philosophy, frequently meets with opposition.

All that concerns me at the moment is the question whether, by education alone, we can ensure the transmission of culture in a society in which some educationists appear indifferent to class distinctions, and from which some other educationists appear to want to remove class distinctions altogether. There is, in any case, a danger of interpreting "education" to cover both too much and too little: too little, when it implies that education is limited to what can be taught; too much, when it implies that everything worth preserving can be transmitted by teaching. In the society desired by some reformers, what the family can transmit will be limited to the minimum, especially if the child is to be, as Mr. H. C. Dent hopes, manipulated by a unified educational system "from the cradle to the grave."[36] And unless the child is classified, by the officials who will have the task of sorting him out, as being just like his father, he will be brought up in a different – not necessarily a better, because all will be equally good, but a different – school environment, and trained on what the official opinion of the moment considers to be "the genuinely democratic lines." The élites, in consequence, will consist solely of individuals whose only common bond will be their professional interest: with no social cohesion, with no social continuity. They will be united only by a part, and that the most conscious part, of their

personalities; they will meet like committees. The greater part of their "culture" will be only what they share with all the other individuals composing their nation.

The case for a society with a class structure, the affirmation that it is, in some sense, the "natural" society, is prejudiced if we allow ourselves to be hypnotised by the two contrasted terms *aristocracy* and *democracy*. The whole problem is falsified if we use these terms antithetically. What I have advanced is not a "defence of aristocracy" – an emphasis upon the importance of one organ of society. Rather it is a plea on behalf of a form of society in which an aristocracy should have a peculiar and essential function, as peculiar and essential as the function of any other part of society. What is important is a structure of society in which there will be, from "top" to "bottom," a continuous gradation of cultural levels: it is important to remember that we should not consider the upper levels as possessing *more* culture than the lower, but as representing a more conscious culture and a greater specialisation of culture. I incline to believe that no true democracy can maintain itself unless it contains these different levels of culture. The levels of culture may also be seen as levels of power, to the extent that a smaller group at a higher level will have equal power with a larger group at a lower level; for it may be argued that complete equality means universal irresponsibility; and in such a society as I envisage, each individual would inherit greater or less responsibility towards the commonwealth, according to the position in society which he inherited – each class would have somewhat different responsibilities. A democracy in which everybody had an equal responsibility in everything would be oppressive for the conscientious and licentious for the rest.

There are other grounds upon which a graded society can be defended; and I hope, in general, that this essay will suggest lines of thought that I shall not myself explore; but I must constantly remind the reader of the limits of my subject. If we agree that the primary vehicle for the transmission of culture is the family, and if we agree that in a more highly civilised society there must be different levels of culture, then it follows that to ensure the transmission of the culture of these different levels there must be groups of families persisting, from generation to generation, each in the same way of life.

And once again I must repeat, that the "conditions of culture" which I set forth do not necessarily produce the higher civilisation: I assert only that when they are absent, the higher civilisation is unlikely to be found.

CHAPTER III
Unity and Diversity: The Region

A diversification among human communities is essential for the provision of the incentive and material for the Odyssey of the human spirit. Other nations of different habits are not enemies: they are godsends. Men require of their neighbours something sufficiently akin to be understood, something sufficiently different to provoke attention, and something great enough to command admiration.

A. N. Whitehead: *Science and the Modern World*[37]

It is a recurrent theme of this essay, that a people should be neither too united nor too divided, if its culture is to flourish. Excess of unity may be due to barbarism and may lead to tyranny; excess of division may be due to decadence and may also lead to tyranny: either excess will prevent further development in culture. The proper degree of unity and of diversity cannot be determined for all peoples at all times. We can only state and illustrate some departments in which excess or defect is dangerous: what is necessary, beneficial or deleterious for a particular people at a particular time, must be left to the wisdom of the sage and the insight of the statesman. Neither a classless society, nor a society of strict and impenetrable social barriers is good; each class should have constant additions and defections; the classes, while remaining distinct, should be able to mix freely; and they should all have a community of culture with each other which will give them something in common, more fundamental than the community which each class has with its counterpart in another society. In the previous chapter we considered the special developments of culture by class: we have now to consider the special developments of culture by region.

Of the advantages of administrative and sentimental unity we hardly need to be reminded, after the experience of war; but it is often assumed that the unity of wartime should be preserved in time of peace. Amongst any people engaged in warfare, especially when the war appears, or can be made to appear, purely defensive, we may expect a spontaneous unity of sentiment which is genuine, an affectation of it on the part of those who merely wish to escape odium, and, from all, submission to the commands of the constituted authorities. We should hope to find the same harmony and docility among the survivors of a shipwreck adrift in a lifeboat. People often express regret that the same unity, self-sacrifice and fraternity which prevail

in an emergency, cannot survive the emergency itself. Most audiences at Barrie's play, *The Admirable Crichton*, have drawn the inference that the social organisation on the island was right, and that the social organisation at the country seat was wrong: I am not sure that Barrie's play is not susceptible of a different interpretation.[38] We must distinguish at all events between the kind of unity which is necessary in an emergency, and that which is appropriate for the development of culture in a nation at peace. It is conceivable, of course, that a period of "peace" may be a period of preparation for war, or of continuation of warfare in another form: in which situation we may expect a deliberate stimulation of patriotic sentiment and a rigorous central government control. It might be expected, too, in such a period, that "economic warfare" would be conducted by strict government discipline, not left to the guerillas and privateers of enterprise. But I am concerned here with the kind and degree of unity desirable in a country which is at peace with other countries,[39†] for if we cannot have periods of real peace, it is futile to hope for culture at all. The kind of unity with which I am concerned is not expressible as a common enthusiasm or a common purpose: enthusiasms and purposes are always transient.

The unity with which I am concerned must be largely unconscious, and therefore can perhaps be best approached through a consideration of the useful diversities. Here I have to do with diversity of region. It is important that a man should feel himself to be, not merely a citizen of a particular nation, but a citizen of a particular part of his country, with local loyalties. These, like loyalty to class, arise out of loyalty to the family. Certainly, an individual may develop the warmest devotion to a place in which he was not born, and to a community with which he has no ancestral ties. But I think we should agree that there would be something artificial, something a little too conscious, about a community of people with strong local feeling, all of whom had come from somewhere else. I think we should say that we must wait for a generation or two for a loyalty which the inhabitants had inherited, and which was not the result of a conscious choice. On the whole, it would appear to be for the best that the great majority of human beings should go on living in the place in which they were born. Family, class and local loyalty all support each other; and if one of these decays, the others will suffer also.

The problem of "regionalism" is seldom contemplated in its proper perspective. I introduce the term "regionalism" deliberately, because of the associations which it is apt to conjure up. It means, I think, to most people,

the conception of some small group of local malcontents conducting a political agitation which, because it is not formidable, is regarded as ludicrous – for any movement for what is assumed to be a lost cause always excites ridicule. We expect to find "regionalists" attempting to revive some language which is disappearing and ought to disappear; or to revive customs of a bygone age which have lost all significance; or to obstruct the inevitable and accepted progress of mechanisation and large-scale industry. The champions of local tradition, indeed, often fail to make the best of their case; and when, as sometimes happens, they are most vigorously opposed and derided by others among their own people, the outsider feels that he has no reason to take them seriously. They sometimes misconceive their own case. They are inclined to formulate the remedy wholly in political terms; and as they may be politically inexperienced, and at the same time are agitated by deeper than political motives, their programmes may be patently impracticable. And when they put forward an economic programme, there, too, they are handicapped by having motives which go deeper than economics, in contrast with men who have the reputation of being practical. Furthermore, the usual regionalist is concerned solely with the interests of his own region, and thereby suggests to his neighbour across the border, that what is to the interest of one must be to the disadvantage of the other. The Englishman, for instance, does not ordinarily think of England as a "region" in the way that a Scottish or Welsh national can think of Scotland or Wales; and as it is not made clear to him that his interests also are involved, his sympathies are not enlisted. Thus the Englishman may identify his own interests with a tendency to obliterate local and racial distinctions, which is as harmful to his own culture as to those of his neighbours. Until the case is generalised, therefore, it is not likely to meet with a fair hearing.

At this point the professed regionalist, if he reads these pages, may suspect that I am playing a trick which he sees through. What I am up to, he may think, is trying to deny him the political and economic autonomy of his region, and appease him by offering him a substitute, "cultural autonomy," which, because it is divorced from political and economic power, will only be a shadow of the real thing. I am quite aware that the political, the economic and the cultural problems cannot be isolated from each other. I am quite aware that any local "cultural revival" which left the political and economic framework unaffected, would hardly be more than an artificially sustained antiquarianism: what is wanted is not to restore a vanished,

or to revive a vanishing culture under modern conditions which make it impossible, but to grow a contemporary culture from the old roots. But the political and economic conditions of healthy regionalism are not the concern of the present essay; nor are they matters on which I am qualified to pronounce. Nor, I think, should the political or the economic problem be the *primary* concern of the true regionalist. The *absolute* value is that each area should have its characteristic culture, which should also harmonise with, and enrich, the cultures of the neighbouring areas. In order to realise this value it is necessary to investigate political and economic alternatives to centralisation in London or elsewhere: and here, it is a question of the possible – of what can be done which will support this absolute value of culture, without injury to the island as a whole and by consequence to that part of it also in which the regionalist is interested. But this is beyond my scope.

We are, you will have noticed, primarily concerned with the particular constellation of cultures which is found in the British Isles. The clearest among the differences to be considered is that of the areas which still possess languages of their own. Even this division is not so simple as it looks: for a people (like the English-speaking Irish) which has lost its language may preserve enough of the structure, idiom, intonation and rhythm of its original tongue (vocabulary is of minor importance) for its speech and writing to have qualities not elsewhere found in the language of its adoption. And on the other hand a "dialect" may preserve the vestiges, on the lowest level of culture, of a variety of the language which once had equal status with any. But the unmistakable *satellite* culture is one which preserves its language, but which is so closely associated with, and dependent upon, another, that not only certain classes of the population, but all of them, have to be bi-lingual. It differs from the culture of the independent small nation in this respect, that in the latter it is usually only necessary for some classes to know another language; and in the independent small nation, those who need to know one foreign language are likely to need two or three: so that the pull towards one foreign culture will be balanced by the attraction of at least one other. A nation of weaker culture may be under the influence of one or another stronger culture at different periods: a true satellite culture is one which, for geographical and other reasons, has a permanent relation to a stronger one.

When we consider what I call the satellite culture, we find two reasons against consenting to its complete absorption into the stronger culture. The first objection is one so profound that it must simply be accepted: it is the

instinct of every living thing to persist in its own being. The resentment against absorption is sometimes most strongly felt, and most loudly voiced, by those individuals in whom it is united with an unacknowledged awareness of inferiority or failure; and on the other hand it is often repudiated by those individuals for whom adoption into the stronger culture has meant success – greater power, prestige or wealth than could have been theirs had their fortunes been circumscribed by their area of origin.[40*] But when the testimony of both these types of individual has been discounted, we may say that any vigorous small people wants to preserve its individuality.

The other reason for the preservation of local culture is one which is also a reason for the satellite culture continuing to be satellite, and not going so far as to try to cut itself off completely. It is that the satellite exercises a considerable influence upon the stronger culture; and so plays a larger part in the world at large than it could in isolation. For Ireland, Scotland and Wales to cut themselves off completely from England would be to cut themselves off from Europe and the world, and no talk of auld alliances would help matters.[41] But it is the other side of the question that interests me more, for it is the side that has received less acknowledgment. It is that the survival of the satellite culture is of very great value to the stronger culture. It would be no gain whatever for English culture, for the Welsh, Scots and Irish to become indistinguishable from Englishmen – what *would* happen, of course, is that we should all become indistinguishable featureless "Britons," at a lower level of culture than that of any of the separate regions. On the contrary, it is of great advantage for English culture to be constantly influenced from Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

A people is judged by history according to its contribution to the culture of other peoples flourishing at the same time and according to its contribution to the cultures which arise afterwards. It is from this point of view that I look at the question of the preservation of languages – I am not interested in languages in an advanced state of decay (that is to say, when they are no longer adequate to the needs of expression of the more educated members of the community). It is sometimes considered an advantage, and a source of glory, that one's own language should be a necessary medium for as many foreigners as possible: I am not sure that this popularity is without grave dangers for any language. A less dubious advantage of certain languages which are native to large numbers of people, is that they have become, because of the work done by scientists and philosophers who have thought in those languages, and because of the traditions thus created,

better vehicles than others for scientific and abstract thought. The case for the more restricted languages must be put on grounds which have less immediate appeal.

The question we may ask about such a language as Welsh, is whether it is of any value to the world at large, that it should be used in Wales. But this is really as much as to ask whether the Welsh, *qua* Welsh, are of any use? not, of course, as human beings, but as the preservers and continuers of a culture which is not English. The direct contribution to poetry by Welshmen and men of Welsh extraction, writing in English, is very considerable; and considerable also is the influence of their poetry upon poets of different racial origins. The fact that an extensive amount of poetry has been written in the Welsh language, in the ages when the English language was unknown in Wales, is of less direct importance: for there appears no reason why this should not be studied by those who will take the trouble to learn the language, on the same terms as poetry written in Latin or Greek. On the surface, there would seem to be every reason why Welsh poets should compose in the English language exclusively: for I know of no instance of a poet having reached the first rank in both languages; and the Welsh influence upon English poetry has been the work chiefly of Welsh poets who wrote only in English. But it must be remembered, that for the transmission of a culture – a peculiar way of thinking, feeling and behaving – and for its maintenance, there is no safeguard more reliable than a language. And to survive for this purpose it must continue to be a literary language – not necessarily a scientific language but certainly a poetic one: otherwise the spread of education will extinguish it. The literature written in that language will not, of course, make any direct impact upon the world at large; but if it is no longer cultivated, the people to whom it belongs (we are considering particularly the Welsh) will tend to lose their racial character. The Welsh will be less Welsh; and their poets will cease to have any contribution to make to English literature, beyond their individual genius. And I am of opinion, that the benefits which Scottish, Welsh and Irish writers have conferred upon English literature are far in excess of what the contribution of all these individual men of genius would have been had they, let us say, all been adopted in early infancy by English foster-parents.

I am not concerned, in an essay which aims at least at the merit of brevity, to defend the thesis, that it is desirable that the English should continue to be English. I am obliged to take that for granted: and if this assumption is called into question, I must defend it on another occasion. But if I can

defend with any success the thesis, that it is to the advantage of England that the Welsh should continue to be Welsh, the Scots Scots and the Irish Irish, then the reader should be disposed to agree that there may be some advantage to other peoples in the English continuing to be English. It is an essential part of my case, that if the other cultures of the British Isles were wholly superseded by English culture, English culture would disappear too. Many people seem to take for granted that English culture is something self-sufficient and secure; that it will persist whatever happens. While some refuse to admit that any foreign influence can be bad, others assume complacently that English culture could flourish in complete isolation from the Continent. To many it has never occurred to reflect that the disappearance of the peripheral cultures of England (to say nothing of the more humble local peculiarities within England itself) might be a calamity. We have not given enough attention to the ecology of cultures. It is probable, I think, that complete uniformity of culture throughout these islands would bring about a lower grade of culture altogether.

It should be clear that I attempt no solution of the regional problem; and the "solution" would have in any case to vary indefinitely according to local needs and possibilities. I am trying only to take apart, and leave to others to reassemble, the elements in the problem. I neither support nor dispute any specific proposals for particular regional reforms. Most attempts to solve the problem seem to me to suffer from a failure to examine closely either the unity, or the differences, between the cultural, political and economic aspects. To deal with one of these aspects, to the exclusion of the others, is to produce a programme which will, because of its inadequacy, appear a little absurd. If the nationalistic motive in regionalism were pushed very far, it certainly would lead to absurdity. The close association of the Bretons with the French, and of the Welsh with the English, is to the advantage of everybody: an association of Brittany and Wales which ruptured their connexions with France and England respectively, would be an unqualified misfortune. For a national culture, if it is to flourish, should be a constellation of cultures, the constituents of which, benefiting each other, benefit the whole.

At this point I introduce a new notion: that of the vital importance for a society of *friction* between its parts. Accustomed as we are to think in figures of speech taken from machinery, we assume that a society, like a machine, should be as well-oiled as possible, provided with ball bearings of the best steel. We think of friction as waste of energy. I shall not attempt to substitute any other imagery: perhaps at this point the less we think in

analogies the better. In the last chapter I suggested that in any society which became permanently established in either a caste or a classless system, the culture would decay: one might even put it that a classless society should always be emerging into class, and a class society should be tending towards obliteration of its class distinctions. I now suggest that both class and region, by dividing the inhabitants of a country into two different kinds of groups, lead to a conflict favourable to creativeness and progress. And (to remind the reader of what I said in my introduction) these are only two of an indefinite number of conflicts and jealousies which should be profitable to society. Indeed, the more the better: so that everyone should be an ally of everyone else in some respects, and an opponent in several others, and no one conflict, envy or fear will dominate.

As individuals, we find that our development depends upon the people whom we meet in the course of our lives. (These people include the authors whose books we read, and characters in works of fiction and history.) The benefit of these meetings is due as much to the differences as to the resemblances; to the conflict, as well as the sympathy, between persons. Fortunate the man who, at the right moment, meets the right friend; fortunate also the man who at the right moment meets the right enemy. I do not approve the extermination of the enemy: the policy of exterminating or, as is barbarously said, liquidating enemies, is one of the most alarming developments of modern war and peace, from the point of view of those who desire the survival of culture. One needs the enemy. So, within limits, the friction, not only between individuals but between groups, seems to me quite necessary for civilisation. The universality of irritation is the best assurance of peace. A country within which the divisions have gone too far is a danger to itself: a country which is too well united – whether by nature or by device, by honest purpose or by fraud and oppression – is a menace to others. In Italy and in Germany, we have seen that a unity with politico-economic aims, imposed violently and too rapidly, had unfortunate effects upon both nations. Their cultures had developed in the course of a history of extreme, and extremely sub-divided regionalism: the attempt to teach Germans to think of themselves as Germans first, and the attempt to teach Italians to think of themselves as Italians first, rather than as natives of a particular small principality or city, was to disturb the traditional culture from which alone any future culture could grow.

I may put the idea of the importance of conflict within a nation more positively, by insisting on the importance of various and sometimes

conflicting loyalties. If we consider these two divisions alone, of class and region, these ought to some extent to operate against each other: a man should have certain interests and sympathies in common with other men of the same local culture as against those of his own class elsewhere; and interests and sympathies in common with others of his class, irrespective of place. Numerous cross-divisions favour peace within a nation, by dispersing and confusing animosities; they favour peace between nations, by giving every man enough antagonism at home to exercise all his aggressiveness. The majority of men commonly dislike foreigners, and are easily inflamed against them; and it is not possible for the majority to know much about foreign peoples. A nation which has gradations of class seems to me, other things being equal, likely to be more tolerant and pacific than one which is not so organised.

So far, we have proceeded from the greater to the less, finding a national culture to be the resultant of an indefinite number of local cultures which, when themselves analysed, are composed of still smaller local cultures. Ideally, each village, and of course more visibly the larger towns, should have each its peculiar character. But I have already suggested that a national culture is the better for being in contact with outside cultures, both giving and receiving: and we shall now proceed in the opposite direction, from the smaller to the larger. As we go in this direction, we find that the content of the term *culture* undergoes some change: the word *means* something rather different, if we are speaking of the culture of a village, of a small region, of an island like Britain which comprehends several distinct racial cultures; and the meaning is altered much more when we come to speak of "European culture." We have to abandon most of the political associations, for whereas in such smaller units of culture as I have just mentioned there is normally a certain unity of government, the unity of government of the Holy Roman Empire was, throughout most of the period covered by the term, both precarious and largely nominal. Of the nature of the unity of culture in Western Europe, I have written in the three broadcast talks – composed for another audience and therefore in a somewhat different style from the body of this essay – which I have added as an appendix under the title of "The Unity of European Culture." I shall not attempt to cover the same ground in this chapter, but shall proceed to enquire what meaning, if any, can be attached to the term "world culture." The investigation of a possible "world culture" should be of particular interest to those who champion any of the various schemes for world-federation, or for a world government: for, obviously, so

long as there exist cultures which are beyond some point antagonistic to each other, antagonistic to the point of irreconcilability, all attempts at politico-economic unification will be in vain. I say "beyond some point," because in the relations of any two cultures there will be two opposite forces balancing each other: attraction and repulsion – without the attraction they could not affect each other, and without the repulsion they could not survive as distinct cultures; one would absorb the other, or both would be fused into one culture. Now the zealots of world-government seem to me sometimes to assume, unconsciously, that their unity of organisation has an absolute value, and that if differences between cultures stand in the way, these must be abolished. If these zealots are of the humanitarian type, they will assume that this process will take place naturally and painlessly: they may, without knowing it, take for granted that the final world-culture will be simply an extension of that to which they belong themselves. Our Russian friends, who are more realistic, if not in the long run any more practical, are much more conscious of irreconcilability between cultures; and appear to hold the view that any culture incompatible with their own should be forcibly uprooted.

The world-planners who are both serious and humane, however, might – if we believed that their methods would succeed – be as grave a menace to culture as those who practise more violent methods. For it must follow from what I have already pleaded about the value of local cultures, that a world culture which was simply a *uniform* culture would be no culture at all. We should have a humanity de-humanised. It would be a nightmare. But on the other hand, we cannot resign the idea of world-culture altogether. For if we content ourselves with the ideal of "European culture" we shall still be unable to fix any definite frontiers. European culture has an area, but no definite frontiers: and you cannot build Chinese walls. The notion of a purely self-contained European culture would be as fatal as the notion of a self-contained national culture: in the end as absurd as the notion of preserving a local uncontaminated culture in a single county or village of England. We are therefore pressed to maintain the ideal of a world culture, while admitting that it is something we cannot *imagine*. We can only conceive it, as the logical term of relations between cultures. Just as we recognise that the parts of Britain must have in one sense, a common culture, though this common culture is only actual in diverse local manifestations, so we must aspire to a common world culture, which will yet not diminish the particularity of the constituent parts. And here, of course, we are finally up against religion, which so far, in the consideration of local

differences within the same area, we have not had to face. Ultimately, antagonistic religions must mean antagonistic cultures; and ultimately, religions cannot be reconciled. From the official Russian point of view there are two objections to religion: first, of course, that religion is apt to provide another loyalty than that claimed by the State; and second, that there are several religions in the world still firmly maintained by many believers. The second objection is perhaps even more serious than the first: for where there is only one religion, it is always possible that that religion may be subtly altered, so that it will enjoin conformity rather than stimulate resistance to the State.

We are the more likely to be able to stay loyal to the ideal of the unimaginable world culture, if we recognise all the difficulties, the practical impossibility, of its realisation. And there are further difficulties which cannot be ignored. We have so far considered cultures as if they had all come into being by the same process of growth: the same people in the same place. But there is the *colonial* problem, and the *colonisation* problem: it is a pity that the word "colony" has had to do duty for two quite different meanings. The colonial problem is that of the relation between an indigenous native culture and a foreign culture, when a higher foreign culture has been imposed, often by force, upon a lower. This problem is insoluble, and takes several forms. There is one problem when we come into contact with a lower culture for the first time: there are very few places in the world where this is still possible. There is another problem where a native culture has already begun to disintegrate under foreign influence, and where a native population has already taken in more of the foreign culture than it can ever expel. There is a third problem where, as in some of the West Indies, several uprooted peoples have been haphazardly mixed. And these problems are insoluble, in the sense that, whatever we do towards their solution or mitigation, we do not altogether know what we are doing. We must be aware of them; we must do what we can, so far as our understanding will take us; but many more forces enter into the changes of the culture of a people than we can grasp and control; and any positive and excellent development of culture is always a miracle when it happens.

The colonisation problem arises from migration. When peoples migrated across Asia and Europe in pre-historic and early times, it was a whole tribe, or at least a wholly representative part of it, that moved together. Therefore, it was a total culture that moved. In the migrations of modern times, the emigrants have come from countries already highly civilised. They came from countries where the development of social organisation was already

complex. The people who migrated have never represented the whole of the culture of the country from which they came, or they have represented it in quite different proportions. They have transplanted themselves according to some social, religious, economic or political determination, or some peculiar mixture of these. There has therefore been something in the removements analogous in nature to religious schism. The people have taken with them only a part of the total culture in which, so long as they remained at home, they participated. The culture which develops on the new soil must therefore be bafflingly alike and different from the parent culture: it will be complicated sometimes by whatever relations are established with some native race, and further by immigration from other than the original source. In this way, peculiar types of culture-sympathy and culture-clash appear, between the areas populated by colonisation, and the countries of Europe from which the migrants came.

There is finally the peculiar case of India, where almost every complication is found to defeat the culture-planner. There is stratification of society which is not purely social but to some extent racial, in a Hindu world which comprehends peoples with an ancient tradition of high civilisation, and tribesmen of very primitive culture indeed. There is Brahminism and there is Islam. There are two or more important cultures on completely different religious foundations. Into this confused world came the British, with their assurance that their own culture was the best in the world, their ignorance of the relation between culture and religion, and (at least since the nineteenth century) their bland assumption that religion was a secondary matter. It is human, when we do not understand another human being, and cannot ignore him, to exert an unconscious pressure on that person to turn him into something that we *can* understand: many husbands and wives exert this pressure on each other. The effect on the person so influenced is liable to be the repression and distortion, rather than the improvement, of the personality; and no man is good enough to have the right to make another over in his own image. The benefits of British rule will soon be lost, but the ill effects of the disturbance of a native culture by an alien one will remain. To offer another people your culture first, and your religion second, is a reversal of values: and while every European represents, for good or ill, the culture to which he belongs, only a small minority are worthy representatives of its religious faith.[42*] The only prospect of stability in India seems the alternative of a development, let us hope under peaceful conditions, into a loose federation of kingdoms, or to a mass uniformity attainable only at

the price of the abolition of class distinctions and the abandonment of all religion – which would mean the disappearance of Indian culture.

I have thought it necessary to make this brief excursion into the several types of culture relation between one nation and the different kinds of foreign area, because the regional problem within the nation has to be seen in this larger context. There can be, of course, no one simple solution. As I have said, the improvement and transmission of culture can never be the direct object of any of our practical activities: all we can do is to try to keep in mind that whatever we do will affect our own culture or that of some other people. We can also learn to respect every other culture as a whole, however inferior to our own it may appear, or however justly we may disapprove of some features of it: the deliberate destruction of another culture as a whole is an irreparable wrong, almost as evil as to treat human beings like animals. But it is when we give our attention to the question of unity and diversity within the limited area that we know best, and within which we have the most frequent opportunities for right action, that we can combat the hopelessness that invades us, when we linger too long upon perplexities so far beyond our measure.

It was necessary to remind ourselves of those considerable areas of the globe, in which the problem takes a different form from ours: of those areas particularly, in which two or more distinct cultures are so inextricably involved with each other, in propinquity and in the ordinary business of living, that "regionalism," as we conceive it in Britain, would be a mockery. For such areas it is probable that a very different type of political philosophy should inspire political action, from that in terms of which we are accustomed to think and act in this part of the world. It is as well to have these differences at the back of our mind, that we may appreciate better the conditions with which we have to deal at home. These conditions are those of a homogeneous general culture, associated with the traditions of one religion: given these conditions, we can maintain the conception of a national culture which will draw its vitality from the cultures of its several areas, within each of which again there will be smaller units of culture having their own local peculiarities.

CHAPTER IV
Unity and Diversity: Sect and Cult

In the first Chapter I tried to place myself at a point of view, from which the same phenomena appear both religious and cultural. In this chapter I

shall be concerned with the cultural significance of religious divisions. While the considerations put forward should, if worthy of being taken seriously, have a particular interest for those Christians who are perplexed over the problem of Christian reunion, they are primarily intended to show that Christian divisions, and therefore schemes for Christian reunion, should be of concern not only to Christians, but to everybody except those who advocate a kind of society which would break completely with the Christian tradition.[43]

I asserted, in the first chapter, that in the most primitive societies no clear distinction is visible between religious and non-religious activities; and that as we proceed to examine the more developed societies, we perceive a greater distinction, and finally contrast and opposition, between these activities. The sort of identity of religion and culture which we observe amongst peoples of very low development cannot recur except in the New Jerusalem. A higher religion is one which is much more difficult to believe. For the more conscious becomes the belief, so the more conscious becomes unbelief: indifference, doubt and scepticism appear, and the endeavour to adapt the tenets of religion to what people in each age find easiest to believe. In the higher religion, it is more difficult also to make behaviour conform to the moral laws of the religion. A higher religion imposes a conflict, a division, torment and struggle within the individual; a conflict sometimes between the laity and the priesthood; a conflict eventually between Church and State.

The reader may have difficulty in reconciling these assertions with the point of view set forth in my first chapter, according to which there is always, even in the most conscious and highly developed societies that we know, an aspect of identity between the religion and the culture. I wish to maintain *both* these points of view. We do not leave the earlier stage of development behind us: it is that upon which we build. The identity of religion and culture remains on the unconscious level, upon which we have superimposed a conscious structure wherein religion and culture are contrasted and can be opposed. The *meaning* of the terms "religion" and "culture" is of course altered between these two levels. To the unconscious level we constantly tend to revert, as we find consciousness an excessive burden; and the tendency towards reversion may explain the powerful attraction which totalitarian philosophy and practice can exert upon humanity. Totalitarianism appeals to the desire to return to the womb. The contrast between religion and culture imposes a strain: we escape from this strain by attempting to revert to an identity of religion and culture which prevailed at a more primitive

stage; as when we indulge in alcohol as an anodyne, we consciously seek unconsciousness. It is only by unremitting effort that we can persist in being individuals in a society, instead of merely members of a disciplined crowd. Yet we remain members of the crowd, even when we succeed in being individuals. Hence, for the purposes of this essay, I am obliged to maintain two contradictory propositions: that religion and culture are aspects of one unity, and that they are two different and contrasted things.

I attempt, as far as possible, to contemplate my problems from the point of view of the sociologist, and not from that of the Christian apologist. Most of my generalisations are intended to have some applicability to all religion, and not only to Christianity; and when, as in what follows in this chapter, I discuss Christian matters, that is because I am particularly concerned with Christian culture, with the Western World, with Europe, and with England. In saying that I aim at taking, as consistently as I can, the sociological point of view, I must make clear that I do not think that the difference between the religious and the sociological point of view is so easily maintained as the difference between a couple of adjectives might lead us to suppose. We may here define the religious point of view, as that from which we ask the question, whether the tenets of a religion are true or false. It follows that we shall be taking the religious point of view, if we are atheists whose thinking is based on the assumption that all religions are untrue. From the sociological point of view, the truth or falsity is irrelevant: we are concerned only with the comparative effects of different religious structures upon culture. Now, if students of the subject could be neatly divided into theologians, including atheists, and sociologists, the problem would be very different from what it is. But, for one thing, no religion can be wholly "understood" from the outside – even for the sociologist's purposes. For another, no one can wholly escape the religious point of view, because in the end one either believes or disbelieves. Therefore, no one can be as wholly detached and disinterested as the ideal sociologist should be. The reader accordingly must try, not only to make allowance for the religious views of the author, but, what is more difficult, to make allowance for his own – and he may never have examined thoroughly his own mind. So both writer and reader must be on guard against assuming that they are wholly detached.[44*]

We have now to consider unity and diversity in religious belief and practice, and enquire what is the situation most favourable to the preservation and improvement of culture. I have suggested in my first chapter that those among the "higher religions" which are most likely to continue to stimulate

culture, are those which are capable of being accepted by peoples of different cultures: those which have the greatest universality – though potential universality by itself may be no criterion of a "higher religion." Such religions can provide a ground pattern of common belief and behaviour, upon which a variety of local patterns can be embroidered; and they will encourage a reciprocal influence of peoples upon each other, such that any cultural progress in one area may quicken development in another. In certain historical conditions, a fierce exclusiveness may be a necessary condition for the preservation of a culture: the Old Testament bears witness to this.[45*†] In spite of this particular historical situation, we should be able to agree that the practice of a common religion, by peoples each having its own cultural character, should usually promote the exchange of influence to their reciprocal advantage. It is of course conceivable that a religion may be too easily accommodated to a variety of cultures, and become assimilated without assimilating; and that this weakness may tend to bring about the opposite result, if the religion breaks up into branches or sects so opposed that they cease to influence each other. Christianity and Buddhism have been exposed to this danger.

From this point it is with Christianity alone that I am to be concerned; in particular with the relation of Catholicism and Protestantism in Europe and the diversity of sects within Protestantism. We must try to start without any bias for, or against, unity or reunion or the maintenance of the separate corporate identity of religious denominations. We must take note of whatever injury appears to have been done to European culture, and to the culture of any part of Europe, by division into sects. On the other hand, we must acknowledge that many of the most remarkable achievements of culture have been made since the sixteenth century, in conditions of disunity: and that some, indeed, as in nineteenth-century France, appear after the religious foundations for culture seem to have crumbled away. We cannot affirm that if the religious unity of Europe had continued, these or equally brilliant achievements would have been realised. Either religious unity or religious division may coincide with cultural efflorescence or cultural decay.

From this point of view, we may take a moderate satisfaction, which should not be allowed to settle into complacency, when we review the history of England. In a nation in which no *tendency* to Protestantism appeared, or in which it was negligible, there must always be a danger of religious petrifaction, and of aggressive unbelief. In a nation in which the

relations of Church and State run too smoothly, it does not matter much, from our present point of view, whether the cause is ecclesiasticism, the dominance of State by Church, or erastianism, the dominance of Church by State.[46] Indeed, it is not always easy to distinguish between the two conditions. The effect equally may be, that every disaffected person, and every sufferer from injustice, will attribute his misfortunes to the inherent evil of the Church, or to an inherent evil in Christianity itself. Formal obedience to the Roman See is itself no assurance that, in a wholly Catholic nation, religion and culture will not become too closely identified. Elements of local culture – even of local barbarism – may become invested with the sanctity of religious observances, and superstition may flourish under the guise of piety: a people may tend to slip back towards the unity of religion and culture that pertains to primitive communities. The result of the unquestioned dominance of one cult, when a people is passive, may be torpor: when a people is quick and self-assertive, the result may be chaos. For, as discontent turns to disaffection, the anti-clerical bias may become an anti-religious tradition; a distinct and hostile culture grows and flourishes, and a nation is divided against itself. The factions have to continue to live with each other; and the common language and ways of life which they retain, far from mollifying animosity, may only exasperate it. The religious division becomes a symbol for a group of associated differences, often rationally unrelated; around these differences swarm a host of private grievances, fears and interests; and the contest for an indivisible heritage may terminate only in exhaustion.

It would here be irrelevant to review those sanguinary passages of civil strife, such as the Thirty Years War, in which Catholics and Protestants fought over such an heritage. Explicit theological contentions between Christians no longer attract to themselves those other irreconcilable interests which seek a decision by arms. The deepest causes of division may still be religious, but they become conscious, not in theological but in political, social and economic doctrines. Certainly, in those countries in which the prevailing faith has been Protestant, anti-clericalism seldom takes a violent form. In such countries, both faith and infidelity tend to be mild and inoffensive; as the culture has become secularised, the cultural differences between faithful and infidel are minimal; the boundary between belief and unbelief is vague; the Christianity is more pliant, the atheism more negative; and all parties live in amity, so long as they continue to accept some common moral conventions.

The situation in England, however, differs from that in other countries, whether Catholic or Protestant. In England, as in other Protestant countries, atheism has been mostly of a passive kind. No statistician could produce an estimate of the numbers of Christians and non-Christians. Many people live on an unmarked frontier enveloped in dense fog; and those who dwell beyond it are more numerous in the dark waste of ignorance and indifference, than in the well-lighted desert of atheism. The English unbeliever, of some social status however humble, is likely to conform to the practices of Christianity on the occasions of birth, death and the first venture in matrimony. Atheists in this country are not yet culturally united: their types of atheism will vary according to the culture of the religious communion in which they, or their parents, or their grandparents were reared. The chief cultural differences in England have, in the past, been those between Anglicanism and the more important Protestant sects; and even these differences are far from clearly defined: first, because the Church of England itself has comprehended wider variations of belief and cult than a foreign observer would believe it possible for one institution to contain without bursting; and second, because of the number and variety of the sects separated from it.

If my contentions in the first chapter are accepted, it will be agreed that the formation of a religion is also the formation of a culture. From this it should follow that, as a religion divides into sects, and as these sects develop from generation to generation, a variety of cultures will be propagated. And, as the intimacy of religion and culture is such that we may expect what happens one way to happen the other, we are prepared to find that the division between Christian cultures will stimulate further differentiations of belief and cult. It does not fall within my purpose to consider the Great Schism between East and West which corresponds to the shifting geographical boundary between two cultures.[47] When we consider the western world, we must recognise that the main cultural tradition has been that corresponding to the Church of Rome. Only within the last four hundred years has any other manifested itself; and anyone with a sense of centre and periphery must admit that the western tradition has been Latin, and Latin means Rome. There are countless testimonies of art and thought and manners; and among these we must include the work of all men born and educated in a Catholic society, whatever their individual beliefs. From this point of view, the separation of Northern Europe, and of England in particular, from communion with Rome represents a diversion from the main stream of

culture. To pronounce, upon this separation, any judgment of value, to assume that it was a good or a bad thing, is what in this investigation we must try to avoid; for that would be to pass from the sociological to the theological point of view. And as I must at this point introduce the term *sub-culture* to signify the culture which pertains to the area of a divided part of Christendom, we must be careful not to assume that a sub-culture is necessarily an inferior culture; remembering also that while a sub-culture may suffer loss in being separated from the main body, the main body may also be mutilated by the loss of a member of itself.

We must recognise next, that where a sub-culture has in time become established as the main culture *of a particular territory*, it tends to change places, for that territory, with the main European culture. In this respect it differs from those sub-cultures representing sects the members of which share a region with the main culture. In England, the main cultural tradition has for several centuries been Anglican. Roman Catholics in England are, of course, in a more central European tradition than are Anglicans; yet, because the main tradition of England has been Anglican, they are in another aspect more outside of the tradition than are Protestant dissenters. It is Protestant dissent which is, in relation to Anglicanism, a congeries of sub-cultures: or, when we regard Anglicanism itself as a sub-culture, we might refer to it as a congeries of "sub-sub-cultures" – as this term is too clownish to be admitted into good company, we can only say "secondary sub-cultures." By Protestant dissent I mean those bodies which recognise each other as "the Free Churches," together with the Society of Friends, which has an isolated but distinguished history: all minor religious entities are culturally negligible. The variations between the charters of the chief religious bodies, have to some extent to do with the peculiar circumstances of their origins, and the length of the separation. It is of some interest that Congregationalism, which has a long history, numbers several distinguished theologians; whereas Methodism, with a briefer history, and less theological justification for its separate existence, appears to rely chiefly on its hymnology, and to need no independent theological structure of its own. But whether we consider a territorial sub-culture, or a secondary sub-culture within a territory or scattered over several territories, we may find ourselves led to the conclusion, that every sub-culture is dependent upon that from which it is an offshoot. The life of Protestantism depends upon the survival of that against which it protests; and just as the culture of Protestant dissent would perish of inanition without the persistence of Anglican culture, so the

maintenance of English culture is contingent upon the health of the culture of Latin Europe, and upon continuing to draw sustenance from that Latin culture.

There is, however, a difference between the division of Canterbury from Rome, and the division of Free Protestantism from Canterbury, which is important for my purposes. It corresponds to a difference presented in the previous chapter, between colonisation by mass migration (as in the early movements westwards across Europe) and colonisation by certain elements separating themselves from a culture which remains at home (as in the colonisation of the Dominions and the Americas). The separation precipitated by Henry VIII had the immediate cause of personal motives in high quarters; it was reinforced by tendencies strong in England and in Northern Europe, of more respectable origin. Once released, the forces of Protestantism went further than Henry himself intended or would have approved. But, although the Reformation in England was, like any other revolution, the work of a minority, and although it met with several local movements of stubborn resistance, it eventually carried with it the greater part of the nation irrespective of class or region. The Protestant sects, on the other hand, represent certain elements in English culture to the exclusion of others: class and occupation played a large part in their formation. It would probably be impossible for the closest student to pronounce how far it is adherence to dissenting tenets that forms a sub-culture, and how far it is the formation of a sub-culture that inspires the finding of reasons for dissent. The solution of that enigma is fortunately not necessary for my purpose. The result, in any case, was a stratification of England by sects, in some measure proceeding from, in some measure aggravating, the cultural distinctions between classes.

It might be possible for a profound student of ethnology and of the history of early settlement in this island, to argue the existence of causes of a more stubborn and more primitive nature, for the tendencies to religious fission. He might trace them to ineradicable differences between the culture of the several tribes, races and languages which from time to time held sway or contested for supremacy. He might, furthermore, take the view that cultural mixture does not necessarily follow the same course as biological mixture; and that, even if we assumed every person of purely English descent to have the blood of all the successive invaders mingled in his veins in exactly the same proportions, it need not follow that cultural fusion ensued. He might therefore discover, in the tendency of various elements in the

population to express their faith in different ways, to prefer different types of communal organisation and different styles of worship, a reflection of early divisions between dominant and subject races. Such speculations, which I am too unlearned to support or oppose, lie outside of my scope; but it is as well for both writer and readers to remind themselves that there may be deeper levels than that upon which the enquiry is being conducted. If differences persisting to the present day could be established in descent from primitive differences of culture, this would only reinforce the case for the unity of religion and culture propounded in my first chapter.

However this may be, there are curiosities enough to occupy our attention in the mixture of motives and interests in the dissensions of religious parties within the period of modern history. One need not be a cynic to be amused, or a devotee to be saddened, by the spectacle of the self-deception, as well as the frequent hypocrisy, of the attackers and defenders of one or another form of the Christian faith. But from the point of view of my essay, both mirth and sorrow are irrelevant, because this confusion is just what one must expect, being inherent in the human condition. There are, certainly, situations in history in which a religious contest can be attributed to a purely religious motive. The life-long battle of St. Athanasius against the Arians and Eutychians need not be regarded in any other light than the light of theology: the scholar who endeavoured to demonstrate that it represented a culture-clash between Alexandria and Antioch, or some similar ingenuity, would appear to us at best to be talking about something else.[48] Even the purest theological issue, however, will in the long run have cultural consequences: a superficial acquaintance with the career of Athanasius should be enough to assure us that he was one of the great builders of western civilisation. And, for the most part, it is *inevitable* that we should, when we defend our religion, be defending at the same time our culture, and vice versa: we are obeying the fundamental instinct to preserve our existence. And in so doing, in the course of time we make many errors and commit many crimes – most of which may be simplified into the one error, of identifying our religion and our culture on a level on which we ought to distinguish them from each other.

Such considerations are relevant not only to the history of religious strife and separation: they are equally pertinent when we come to entertain schemes for reunion. The importance of stopping to examine cultural peculiarities, to disentangle religious from cultural hindrances, has hitherto been overlooked – and I should say more than overlooked: deliberately

though unconsciously ignored – in the schemes of reunion between Christian bodies adopted or put forward. Hence the appearance of disingenuousness, of agreement upon formulae to which the contracting parties can give different interpretations, which provokes a comparison with treaties between governments.

The reader unacquainted with the details of "oecumenicity," should be reminded of the difference between *intercommunion* and *reunion*. An arrangement of inter-communion between two national churches – such as the Church of England and the Church of Sweden – or between the Church of England and one of the Eastern Churches, or between the Church of England and a body such as the "Old Catholics" found in Holland and elsewhere on the Continent, does not necessarily look any further than what the term implies: a reciprocal recognition of the "validity of orders" and of the orthodoxy of tenets; with the consequence that the members of each church can communicate, the priests celebrate and preach, in the churches of the other country. An agreement of inter-communion could only lead toward reunion in one of two events: the unlikely event of a political union of the two nations, or the ultimate event of a worldwide reunion of Christians. Reunion, on the other hand, means in effect either reunion of one or another body having episcopal government, with the Church of Rome, or reunion between bodies separated from each other in the same areas. The movements towards reunion which are at the present time most active, are of the second kind: reunion between the Anglican Church and one or more of the "Free Church" bodies. It is with the cultural implications of this latter kind of reunion that we are here specially concerned. There can be no question of reunion between the Church of England and, let us say, the Presbyterians or Methodists in America: any reunion would be of American Presbyterians with the Episcopal Church in America, and of English Presbyterians with the Church of England.

It should be obvious, from the considerations advanced in my first chapter, that complete reunion involves community of culture – some common culture already existing, and the potentiality of its further development consequent upon official reunion. The ideal reunion of all Christians does not, of course, imply an eventual *uniform* culture the world over: it implies simply a "Christian culture" of which all local cultures should be variants – and they would and should vary very widely indeed. We can already distinguish between a "local culture" and a "European culture"; when we use the latter term we recognise the local differences; similarly a universal

"Christian culture" should not be taken to ignore or override the differences between the cultures of the several continents. But the existence of a strong community of culture between various Christian bodies in the same area (we must remember that we here mean "culture" as distinguished from "religion") not only facilitates reunion of Christians in that area, but exposes such reunion to peculiar dangers.

I have put forward the view that every division of a Christian people into sects brings about or aggravates the development of "sub-cultures" amongst that people; and I have asked the reader to examine Anglicanism and the Free Churches for confirmation of this view. But it should now be added, that the cultural division between Anglicans and Free Churchmen has, under changing social and economic conditions, become attenuated. The organisation of rural society from which the Church of England drew much of its cultural strength is in decay; the landed gentry have less security, less power and less influence; the families which have risen in trade and in many places succeeded to territorial proprietorship are themselves progressively reduced and impoverished. A diminishing number of Anglican clergy come from public schools or the old universities, or are educated at their families' expense; bishops are not wealthy men, and are embarrassed in keeping up palaces. Anglican and Free Church laymen have been educated at the same universities and often at the same schools. And finally, they are all exposed to the same environment of a culture severed from religion. When men of different religious persuasions are drawn together by common interests and common anxieties, by their awareness of an increasingly oppressive non-Christian world, and by their unawareness of the extent to which they are themselves penetrated by non-Christian influences and by a neutral culture, it is only to be expected that the vestiges of the distinctions between their several Christian cultures should seem to them of minor significance.

With the dangers of reunion on erroneous or evasive terms I am not here concerned; but I am much concerned with the danger that reunion facilitated by the disappearance of the cultural characteristics of the several bodies reunited might accelerate and confirm the general lowering of culture. The refinement or crudity of theological and philosophical thinking is itself, of course, one of the measures of the state of our culture; and the tendency in some quarters to reduce theology to such principles as a child can understand or a Socinian accept, is itself indicative of cultural debility.[49] But there is a further danger, from our point of view, in schemes of reunion which attempt to remove the difficulties, and protect the self-assertiveness,

of everybody. In an age like our own, when it has become a point of politeness to dissimulate social distinctions, and to pretend that the highest degree of "culture" ought to be made accessible to everybody – in an age of cultural levelling, it will be denied that the several Christian fragments to be re-united represent any cultural differences. There is certain to be a strong pressure towards a reunion on terms of complete cultural equality. Too much account may even be taken of the relative numbers of the membership of the uniting bodies: for a main culture will remain a main culture, and a sub-culture will remain a sub-culture, even if the latter attracts more adherents than the former. It is always the main religious body which is the guardian of more of the remains of the higher developments of culture preserved from a past time before the division took place. Not only is it the main religious body which has the more elaborated theology; it is the main religious body which is the least alienated from the best intellectual and artistic activity of its time. Hence it is that the convert – and I think not only of conversion from one form of Christianity to another, but indeed primarily of conversion from indifference to Christian belief and practice – the convert of the intellectual or sensitive type is drawn towards the more Catholic type of worship and doctrine. This attraction, which may occur before the prospective convert has begun to inform himself about Christianity at all, may be cited by the outsider as evidence that the convert has become a Christian for the wrong reasons, or that he is guilty of insincerity and affectation. Every sin that can be imagined has been practised, and the pretence of religious faith may often enough have cloaked intellectual or aesthetic vanity and self-indulgence; but, on the view of the intimacy of religion and culture which is the starting point of my examination, such phenomena as the progress to religious faith through cultural attraction are both natural and acceptable.

After the considerations now reviewed, I must attempt to link the chapter to the two preceding chapters, by enquiring what is the ideal pattern of unity and diversity between Christian nations and between the several strata in each nation. It should be obvious that the sociological point of view cannot lead us to those conclusions which can properly be reached only by theological premisses; and the reader of the previous chapters will be prepared to find no solution in any rigid and unchangeable scheme. No security against cultural deterioration is offered by any of the three chief types of religious organisation: the international church with a central government, the national church, or the separated sect. The danger of freedom is

deliquescence; the danger of strict order is petrifaction. Nor can we judge from the history of any particular society, whether a different religious history would have resulted in a more healthy culture to-day. The disastrous effects of armed religious strife within a people, as in England in the seventeenth century or in the German States in the sixteenth, need no emphasis; the disintegrating effect of sectarian division has already been touched upon. Yet we may ask whether Methodism did not, in the period of its greatest fervour, revive the spiritual life of the English, and prepare the way for the Evangelical Movement and even for the Oxford Movement. Furthermore, Dissent made it possible for "working class" Christians (though perhaps it might have done more than it has for "labouring class" Christians) to play that part, which all zealous and socially active Christians should wish to play, in the conduct of their local church and the social and charitable organisations connected with it.[50*] The actual choice, at times, has been between sectarianism and indifference; and those who chose the former were, in so doing, keeping alive the culture of certain social strata. And, as I have said at the beginning, the appropriate culture of each stratum is of equal importance.

As in the relation between the social classes, and as in the relation of the several regions of a country to each other and to the central power, it would seem that a constant struggle between the centripetal and the centrifugal forces is desirable. For without the struggle no balance can be maintained; and if either force won the result would be deplorable. The conclusions to which we are justified in coming, from our premisses and from the sociologist's point of view, appear to me to be as follows. Christendom should be one: the form of organisation, and the locus of powers in that unity is a question upon which we cannot pronounce. But within that unity there should be an endless conflict between ideas – for it is only by the struggle against constantly appearing false ideas that the truth is enlarged and clarified, and in the conflict with heresy that orthodoxy is developed to meet the needs of the time; an endless effort also on the part of each region to shape its Christianity to suit itself, an effort which should neither be wholly suppressed nor left wholly unchecked. The local temperament must express its particularity in its form of Christianity, and so must the social stratum, so that the culture proper to each area and each class may flourish; but there must also be a force holding these areas and these classes together. If this corrective force in the direction of uniformity of belief and practice is lacking, then the culture of each part will suffer. We have already found that the

culture of a nation prospers with the prosperity of the culture of its several constituents, both geographical and social; but that it also needs to be itself a part of a larger culture, which requires the ultimate ideal, however unrealisable, of a "world culture" in a sense different from that implicit in the schemes of world-federationists. And without a common faith, all efforts towards drawing nations closer together in culture can produce only an illusion of unity.

CHAPTER V
A Note on Culture and Politics

Politics did not, however, so much engage him as to withhold his thoughts from things of more importance.

Samuel Johnson on George Lyttelton[51]

We observe nowadays that "culture" attracts the attention of men of politics: not that politicians are always "men of culture," but that "culture" is recognised both as an instrument of policy, and as something socially desirable which it is the business of the State to promote. We not only hear, from high political quarters, that "cultural relations" between nations are of great importance, but find that bureaux are founded, and officials appointed, for the express purpose of attending to these relations, which are presumed to foster international amity. The fact that culture has become, in some sense, a department of politics, should not obscure in our memory the fact that at other periods politics has been an activity pursued within a culture, and between representatives of different cultures. It is therefore not impertinent to attempt to indicate the place of politics within a culture united and divided according to the kind of unity and division which we have been considering.

We may assume, I think, that in a society so articulated the practice of politics and an active interest in public affairs would not be the business of everybody, or of everybody to the same degree; and that not everybody should concern himself, except at moments of crisis, with the conduct of the nation as a whole. In a healthily *regional* society, public affairs would be the business of everybody, or of the great majority, only within very small social units; and would be the business of a progressively smaller number of men in the larger units within which the smaller were comprehended. In a healthily *stratified* society, public affairs would be a responsibility not equally

borne: a greater responsibility would be inherited by those who inherited special advantages, and in whom self-interest, and interest for the sake of their families ("a stake in the country") should cohere with public spirit. The governing élite, of the nation as a whole, would consist of those whose responsibility was inherited with their affluence and position, and whose forces were constantly increased and often led, by rising individuals of exceptional talents. But when we speak of a governing élite, we must safeguard ourselves against thinking of an élite sharply divided from the other élites of society.

The relation of the political élite – by which we mean the leading members of *all* the effective and recognised political groups: for the survival of a parliamentary system requires a constant *dining with the Opposition*[52*] – to the other élites would be put too crudely if described as communication between men of action and men of thought. It is rather a relation between men of different types of mind and different areas of thought and action. A sharp distinction between thought and action is no more tenable for the political than for the religious life, in which the contemplative must have his own activity, and the secular priest must not be wholly unpractised in meditation. There is no plane of active life on which thought is negligible, except that of the merest automatic execution of orders; and there is no species of thinking which can be quite without effect upon action.

I have suggested elsewhere[53*] that a society is in danger of disintegration when there is a lack of contact between people of different areas of activity – between the political, the scientific, the artistic, the philosophical and the religious minds. This separation cannot be repaired merely by public organisation. It is not a question of assembling into committees representatives of different types of knowledge and experience, of calling in everybody to advise everybody else. The élite should be something different, something much more organically composed, than a panel of bonzes, caciques and tycoons. Men who meet only for definite serious purposes, and on official occasions, do not wholly meet. They may have some common concern very much at heart; they may, in the course of repeated contacts, come to share a vocabulary and an idiom which appear to communicate every shade of meaning necessary for their common purpose; but they will continue to retire from these encounters each to his private social world as well as to his solitary world. Everyone has observed that the possibilities of contented silence, of a mutual happy awareness when engaged upon a common task, or an underlying seriousness and significance in the enjoyment of a silly joke,

are characteristics of any close personal intimacy; and the congeniality of any circle of friends depends upon a common social convention, a common ritual, and common pleasures of relaxation. These aids to intimacy are no less important for the communication of meaning in words, than the possession of a common subject upon which the several parties are informed. It is unfortunate for a man when his friends and his business associates are two unrelated groups; it is also narrowing when they are one and the same group.

Such observations upon personal intimacy cannot pretend to any novelty: the only possible novelty is in calling attention to them in this context. They point to the desirability of a society in which persons of every superior activity can meet without merely talking shop or being at pains to talk each other's shop. In order correctly to appraise a man of action we must meet him: or we must at least have known enough men of similar pursuits to be able to draw a shrewd guess about one whom we have not met. And to meet a man of thought, and to form an impression of his personality, may be of great assistance in judging his ideas. This is not wholly improper even in the field of art, though with important reservations, and though the impressions of an artist's personality often affect opinion of his work quite irrelevantly – for every artist must have remarked, that while a small number of people dislike his work more strongly after meeting him, there are also many who are more friendly disposed towards his work if they find him a pleasant fellow. These advantages persist however they may offend the reason, and in spite of the fact that in modern societies of large numbers, it is impossible for everyone to know everyone else.

In our time, we read too many new books, or are oppressed by the thought of the new books which we are neglecting to read; we read many books, because we cannot know enough people; we cannot know everybody whom it would be to our benefit to know, because there are too many of them. Consequently, if we have the skill to put words together and the fortune to get them printed, we communicate by writing more books. It is often those writers whom we are lucky enough to know, whose books we can ignore; and the better we know them personally, the less need we may feel to read what they write. We are encumbered not only with too many new books: we are further embarrassed by too many periodicals, reports and privately circulated memoranda. In the endeavour to keep up with the most intelligent of these publications we may sacrifice the three permanent reasons for reading: the acquisition of wisdom, the enjoyment of art, and the pleasure

of entertainment. Meanwhile, the professional politician has too much to do to have leisure for serious reading, even on politics. He has far too little time for exchange of ideas and information with men of distinction in other walks of life. In a society of smaller size (a society, therefore, which was less feverishly *busy*) there might be more conversation and fewer books; and we should not find the tendency – of which this essay provides one example – for those who have acquired some reputation, to write books outside the subject on which they have made that reputation.

It is unlikely, in all the mass of letterpress, that the profoundest and most original works will reach the eye or command the attention of a large public, or even of a good number of the readers who are qualified to appreciate them. The ideas which flatter a current tendency or emotional attitude will go farthest; and some others will be distorted to fit in with what is already accepted. The residuum in the public mind is hardly likely to be a distillation of the best and wisest: it is more likely to represent the common prejudices of the majority of editors and reviewers. In this way are formed the *idées reçues* – more precisely the *mots reçus*[54] – which, because of their emotional influence upon that part of the public which is influenced by printed matter, have to be taken into account by the professional politician, and treated with respect in his public utterances. It is unnecessary, for the simultaneous reception of these "ideas," that they should be consistent among themselves; and, however they contradict each other, the practical politician must handle them with as much deference as if they were the constructions of informed sagacity, the intuitions of genius, or the accumulated wisdom of ages. He has not, as a rule, inhaled any fragrance they may have had when they were fresh; he only noses them when they have already begun to stink.

In a society so graded as to have several levels of culture, and several levels of power and authority, the politician might at least be restrained, in his use of language, by his respect for the judgment, and fear of the ridicule, of a smaller and more critical public, among which was maintained some standard of prose style. If it were also a decentralised society, a society in which local cultures continued to flourish, and in which the majority of problems were local problems on which local populations could form an opinion from their own experience and from conversation with their neighbours, political utterances might also tend to manifest greater clarity and be susceptible of fewer variations of interpretation. A local speech on a local issue is likely to be more intelligible than one addressed to a whole nation, and we observe

that the greatest muster of ambiguities and obscure generalities is usually to be found in speeches which are addressed to the whole world.

It is always desirable that a part of the education of those persons who are either born into, or qualified by their abilities to enter, the superior political grades of society, should be instruction in history, and that a part of the study of history should be the history of political theory. The advantage of the study of Greek history and Greek political theory, as a preliminary to the study of other history and other theory, is its *manageability*: it has to do with a small area, with men rather than masses, and with the human passions of individuals rather than with those vast impersonal forces which in our modern society are a necessary convenience of thought, and the study of which tends to obscure the study of human beings. The reader of Greek philosophy, moreover, is unlikely to be over-sanguine about the effects of political theory; for he will observe that the study of political forms appears to have arisen out of the failure of political systems; and that neither Plato nor Aristotle was much concerned with prediction, or very optimistic about the future.

The kind of political theory which has arisen in quite modern times is less concerned with human nature, which it is inclined to treat as something which can always be re-fashioned to fit whatever political form is regarded as most desirable. Its real data are impersonal forces which may have originated in the conflict and combination of human wills but have come to supersede them. As a part of academic discipline for the young, it suffers from several drawbacks. It tends, of course, to form minds which will be set to think only in terms of impersonal and inhuman forces, and thereby to de-humanise its students. Being occupied with humanity only in the mass, it tends to separate itself from ethics; being occupied only with that recent period of history during which humanity can most easily be shown to have been ruled by impersonal forces, it reduces the proper study of mankind to the last two or three hundred years of man. It too often inculcates a belief in a future inflexibly determined and at the same time in a future which we are wholly free to shape as we like. Modern political thought, inextricably involved with economics and with sociology, preempts to itself the position of queen of the sciences. For the exact and experimental sciences are judged according to their utility, and are valued in so far as they produce results – either for making life more comfortable and less laborious, or for making it more precarious and ending it more quickly. Culture itself is regarded either as a negligible by-product which can be left to itself, or as a department of

life to be organised in accordance with the particular scheme we favour. I am thinking not only of the more dogmatic and totalitarian philosophies of the present day, but of assumptions which colour thinking in every country and tend to be shared by the most opposed parties.

An important document in the history of the political direction of culture will be Leon Trotsky's essay, *Literature and Revolution*, of which an English translation appeared in 1925.[55*] The conviction, which seems to be deeply implanted in the Muscovite mind, that it is the role of Mother Russia to contribute not merely ideas and political forms, but a total way of life for the rest of the world, has gone far to make us all more politically culture-conscious. But there have been other causes than the Russian Revolution for this consciousness. The researches and the theories of anthropologists have played their part, and have led us to study the relations of imperial powers and subject peoples with a new attention. Governments are more aware of the necessity of taking account of cultural differences; and to the degree to which colonial administration is controlled from the imperial centre, these differences become of increasing importance. One people in isolation is not aware of having a "culture" at all. And the differences between the several European nations in the past were not wide enough to make their peoples see their cultures as different to the point of conflict and incompatibility: culture-consciousness as a means of uniting a nation against other nations was first exploited by the late rulers of Germany. To-day, we have become culture-conscious in a way which nourishes nazism, communism and nationalism all at once; in a way which emphasises separation without helping us to overcome it. At this point a few remarks on the cultural effects of empire (in the most comprehensive sense) may not be amiss.

The early British rulers of India were content to rule; some of them, through long residence and continuous absence from Britain, assimilated themselves to the mentality of the people they governed. A later type of rulers, explicitly and increasingly the servants of Whitehall, and serving only for a limited period (after which they returned to their native country, either to retirement or to some other activity) aimed rather to bring to India the benefits of western civilisation. They did not intend to uproot, or to impose, a total "culture": but the superiority of western political and social organisation, of English education, of English justice, of western "enlightenment" and science seemed to them so self-evident that the desire to do good would alone have been a sufficient motive for introducing these things. The Briton, unconscious of the importance of religion in the formation of

his own culture, could hardly be expected to recognise its importance in the preservation of another. In the piece-meal imposition of a foreign culture – an imposition in which force plays only a small part: the appeal to ambition, and the temptation to which the native is exposed, to admire the wrong things in western civilisation, and for the wrong reasons, are much more decisive – the motives of arrogance and generosity are always inextricably mixed; there is at the same time an assertion of superiority and a desire to communicate the way of life upon which that assumed superiority is based; so that the native acquires a taste for western ways, a jealous admiration of material power, and a resentment against his tutors. The partial success of westernisation, of which some members of an Eastern society are quick to seize the apparent advantages, has tended to make the Oriental more discontented with his own civilisation and more resentful of that which has caused this discontent; has made him more conscious of differences, at the same time that it has obliterated some of these differences; and has broken up the native culture on its highest level, without penetrating the mass. And we are left with the melancholy reflection that the cause of this disintegration is not corruption, brutality or maladministration: such ills have played but a small part, and no ruling nation has had less to be ashamed of than Britain in these particulars; corruption, brutality and maladministration were too prevalent in India before the British arrived, for commission of them to disturb the fabric of Indian life. The cause lies in the fact that there can be no permanent compromise between the extremes of an external rule which is content to keep order and leave the social structure unaltered, and a complete cultural assimilation. The failure to arrive at the latter is a religious failure.[56*]

To point to the damage that has been done to native cultures in the process of imperial expansion is by no means an indictment of empire itself, as the advocates of imperial dissolution are only too apt to infer. Indeed, it is often these same anti-imperialists who, being liberals, are the most complacent believers in the superiority of Western civilisation, and at one and the same time blind to the benefits conferred by imperial government and to the injury done by the destruction of native culture. According to such enthusiasts, we do well to intrude ourselves upon another civilisation, equip the members of it with our mechanical contrivances, our systems of government, education, law, medicine and finance, inspire them with a contempt for their own customs and with an enlightened attitude towards religious superstition – and then leave them to stew in the broth which we have brewed for them.

It is noticeable that the most vehement criticism, or abuse, of British imperialism often comes from representatives of societies which practise a different form of imperialism – that is to say, of expansion which brings material benefits and extends the influence of culture. America has tended to impose its way of life chiefly in the course of doing business, and creating a taste for its commodities. Even the humblest material artefact, which is the product and the symbol of a particular civilisation, is an emissary of the culture out of which it comes: to particularise only by mentioning that influential and inflammable article the celluloid film; and thus American economic expansion may be also, in its way, the cause of disintegration of cultures which it touches.

The newest type of imperialism, that of Russia, is probably the most ingenious, and the best calculated to flourish according to the temper of the present age. The Russian Empire appears to be sedulous to avoid the weaknesses of the empires which have preceded it: it is at the same time more ruthless and more careful of the vanity of subject peoples. The official doctrine is one of complete racial equality – an appearance easier for Russia to preserve in Asia, because of the oriental cast of the Russian mind and because of the backwardness of Russian development according to western standards. Attempts appear to be made to preserve the similitude of local self-government and autonomy: the aim, I suspect, is to give the several local republics and satellite states the illusion of a kind of independence, while the real power is exercised from Moscow. The illusion must sometimes fade, when a local republic is suddenly and ignominiously reduced to the status of a kind of province or crown colony; but it is maintained – and this is what is most interesting from our point of view – by a careful fostering of local "culture," culture in the reduced sense of the word, as everything that is picturesque, harmless and separable from politics, such as language and literature, local arts and customs. But as Soviet Russia must maintain the subordination of culture to political theory, the success of her imperialism seems likely to lead to a sense of superiority on the part of that one of her peoples in which her political theory has been formed; so that we might expect, so long as the Russian Empire holds together, to find the increasing assertion of one dominant Muscovite culture, with subordinate races surviving, not as peoples each with its own cultural pattern, but as inferior castes. However that may be, the Russians have been the first modern people to practise the political direction of culture consciously, and to attack at every point the culture of any people whom they wish to dominate. The

more highly developed is any alien culture, the more thorough the attempts to extirpate it by elimination of those elements in the subject population in which that culture is most conscious.

The dangers arising from "culture-consciousness" in the West are at present of a different kind. Our motives, in attempting to do something about our culture, are not yet consciously political. They arise from the consciousness that our culture is not in very good health and from the feeling that we must take steps to improve its condition. This consciousness has transformed the problem of education, by either identifying culture with education, or turning to education as the one instrument for improving our culture. As for the intervention of the State, or of some quasi-official body subventioned by the State, in assistance of the arts and sciences, we can see only too well the need, under present conditions, for such support. A body like the British Council, by constantly sending representatives of the arts and sciences abroad, and inviting foreign representatives to this country, is in our time invaluable – but we must not come to accept as permanent or normal and healthy the conditions which make such direction necessary. We are prepared to believe that there will, under any conditions, be useful work for the British Council to perform; but we should not like to be assured that never again will it be possible for the intellectual élite of all countries to travel as private citizens and make each other's acquaintance without the approval and support of some official organisation. Some important activities, it is likely enough, will never again be possible without official backing of some kind. The progress of the experimental sciences now requires vast and expensive equipment; and the practice of the arts has no longer, on any large scale, the benefit of private patronage. Some safeguard may be provided, against increasing centralisation of control and politicisation of the arts and sciences, by encouraging local initiative and responsibility; and, as far as possible, separating the central source of funds from control over their use. We should do well also, to refer to the subsidised and artificially stimulated activities each by its name: let us do what is necessary for painting and sculpture, or architecture, or the theatre, or music, or one or another science or department of intellectual exercise, speaking of each by its name, and restraining ourselves from using the word "culture" as a comprehensive term. For thus we slip into the assumption that culture can be planned. Culture can never be wholly conscious – there is always more to it than we are conscious of; and it cannot be planned because it is also the unconscious background of all our planning.

CHAPTER VI
Notes on Education and Culture: and Conclusion

During the recent war an exceptional number of books were published on the subject of education; there were also voluminous reports of commissions, and an incalculable number of contributions on this subject in periodicals. It is not my business, nor is it within my competence, to review the whole of current educational theory; but a few comments on it are in place, because of the close association, in many minds, between education and culture. What is of interest to my thesis is the kind of assumption which is made by those who write about education. The notes which follow comment on a few such prevalent assumptions.

1. *That, before entering upon any discussion of Education, the purpose of Education must be stated.*

This is a very different thing from defining the word "education." The Oxford Dictionary tells us that education is "the process of bringing up (young persons)"; that it is "the systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young (and, by extension, to adults) in preparation for the work of life"; that it is also "culture or development of powers, formation of character." We learn that the first of these definitions is according to the use of the sixteenth century; and that the third use appears to have arisen in the nineteenth.[57] In short, the dictionary tells you what you know already, and I do not see how a dictionary could do more. But when writers attempt to state the *purpose* of education, they are doing one of two things: they are eliciting what they believe to have been the unconscious purpose always, and thereby giving their own meaning to the history of the subject; or they are formulating what may not have been, or may have been only fitfully, the real purpose in the past, but should in their opinion be the purpose directing development in the future. Let us look at a few of these statements of the purpose of education. In *The Churches Survey Their Task*, a volume published in connexion with the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State in 1937, we find the following:

> Education is the process by which the community seeks to open its life to all the individuals within it and enable them to take their part in it. It attempts to pass on to them its culture, including the standards by which it would have them live. Where that culture is regarded as final, the

> attempt is made to impose it on younger minds. Where it is viewed as a stage in a development, younger minds are trained both to receive it and to criticize and improve upon it.
>
> This culture is composed of various elements. It runs from rudimentary skill and knowledge up to the interpretation of the universe and of man by which the community lives. . . .[58]

The purpose of education, it seems, is to transmit culture: so culture (which has not been defined) is likely to be limited to what can be transmitted by education. While "education" is perhaps allowed to be more comprehensive than "the educational system," we must observe that the assumption that culture can be summed up as skills and interpretations controverts the more comprehensive view of culture which I have endeavoured to take. Incidentally, we should keep a sharp eye on this personified "community" which is the repository of authority.

Another account of the purpose of education is that which sees it in terms of political and social change. This, if I have understood him, is the purpose which fires Mr. H. C. Dent. "Our ideal," he says in *A New Order in English Education*, "is a full democracy."[59] Full democracy is not defined; and, if full democracy is attained, we should like to know what is to be our next ideal for education after this ideal has been realised.

Mr. Herbert Read gives his account of the purpose of education in *Education Through Art*. I do not think that Mr. Read could see quite eye to eye with Mr. Dent, for whereas Mr. Dent wants a "full democracy," Mr. Read says that he "elects for a libertarian conception of democracy," which I suspect is a very different democracy from Mr. Dent's.[60] Mr. Read (in spite of *elects for*) is a good deal more precise in his use of words than Mr. Dent; so, while he is less likely to confuse the hasty reader, he is more likely to confound the diligent one. It is in electing for a libertarian conception of democracy, he says, that we answer the question "what is the purpose of education?" This purpose is further defined as "the reconciliation of individual uniqueness with social unity."[61]

Another kind of account of the purpose of education is the uncompleted account, of which Dr. F. C. Happold (in *Towards a New Aristocracy*) gives us a specimen. The fundamental task of education, he tells us, is "training the sort of men and women the age needs."[62] If we believe that there are some sorts of men and women which are needed by every age, we may remark that there should be permanence as well as change in education. But the account

is incomplete, in that we are left wondering who is to determine what are the needs of the age.

One of the most frequent answers to the question "what is the purpose of education?" is "happiness." Mr. Herbert Read gives us this answer too, in a pamphlet called *The Education of Free Men*, by saying that he knows of no better definition of the aims of education than that of William Godwin: "the true object of education . . . is the generation of happiness."[63] "The Government's purpose," said the White Paper which heralded the latest Education Act, "is to secure for children a happier childhood and a better start in life."[64] Happiness is often associated with "the full development of personality."

Dr. C. E. M. Joad, showing more prudence than most of those who attempt to answer this question, holds the view, which seems to me a very sensible one, that education has a number of ends. Of these he lists three (in *About Education*, one of the most readable books on the subject that I have consulted):

1. To equip a boy or girl to earn his or her living. . . .
2. To equip him to play his part as the citizen of a democracy.
3. To enable him to develop all the latent powers and faculties of his nature and so to enjoy a good life.[65]

It is a relief, at this point, to have presented to us the simple and intelligible notion that equipment to earn one's living is one of the purposes of education. We again note the close association between education and democracy; here also Dr. Joad is perhaps more prudent than Mr. Dent or Mr. Read in not qualifying his "democracy" by an adjective. "To develop all the latent powers and faculties" appears to be a variant of "the full development of personality": but Dr. Joad is sagacious in avoiding the use of that puzzling word "personality."

Some, no doubt, will disagree with Dr. Joad's selection of purposes. And we may, with more reason, complain that none of them takes us very far without getting us into trouble. They all contain some truth: but as each of them needs to be corrected by the others, it is possible that they all need to be adjusted to other purposes as well. Each of them needs some qualification. A particular course of education may, in the world in which a young person finds himself, be exactly what is needed to develop his peculiar gifts and yet impair his ability to earn a living. Education of the young to play their part in a democracy is a necessary adaptation of individual to

environment, if a democracy is what he is going to play his part in: if not, it is making the pupil instrumental to the accomplishment of a social change which the educator has at heart – and this is not education but something else. I am not denying that a democracy is the best form of society, but by introducing this standard for education, Dr. Joad, with other writers, is leaving it open to those who believe in some other form of society which Dr. Joad might not like, to substitute (and so far as he is talking about education only, Dr. Joad could not confute him) some account like the following: "One of the purposes of education is to equip a boy or girl to play his or her part as the subject of a despotic government." Finally, as for developing all the latent powers and faculties of one's nature, I am not sure that anyone should hope for that: it may be that we can only develop some powers and faculties at the expense of others, and that there must be some choice, as well as inevitably some accident, in the direction which anyone's development takes. And as for the good life, there is some ambiguity in the sense in which we shall "enjoy" it; and what the good life is, has been a subject of discussion from early times to the present day.

What we remark especially about the educational thought of the last few years, is the enthusiasm with which education has been taken up as an instrument for the realisation of social ideals. It would be a pity if we overlooked the possibilities of education as a means of acquiring *wisdom*; if we belittled the acquisition of *knowledge* for the satisfaction of curiosity, without any further motive than the desire to know; and if we lost our respect for *learning*. So much for the purpose of education. I proceed to the next assumption.

2. *That Education makes people happier.*

We have already found that the purpose of education has been defined as the making people happier. The assumption that it *does* make people happier needs to be considered separately. That the educated person is happier than the uneducated is by no means self-evident. Those who are conscious of their lack of education are discontented, if they cherish ambitions to excel in occupations for which they are not qualified; they are sometimes discontented, simply because they have been given to understand that more education would have made them happier. Many of us feel some grievance against our elders, our schools or our universities for not having done better by us: this can be a way of extenuating our own shortcomings and excusing our failures. On the other hand, to be educated above the

level of those whose social habits and tastes one has inherited, may cause a division within a man which interferes with happiness; even though, when the individual is of superior intellect, it may bring him a fuller and more useful life. And to be trained, taught or instructed above the level of one's abilities and strength may be disastrous; for education is a strain, and can impose greater burdens upon a mind than that mind can bear. Too much education, like too little education, can produce unhappiness.

3. *That Education is something that everyone wants.*

People can be persuaded to desire almost anything, for a time, if they are constantly told that it is something to which they are entitled and which is unjustly withheld from them. The spontaneous desire for education is greater in some communities than in others; it is generally agreed to be stronger in the North than in the South of England, and stronger still in Scotland. It is possible that the desire for education is greater where there are difficulties in the way of obtaining it – difficulties not insuperable but only to be surmounted at the cost of some sacrifice and privation. If this is so, we may conjecture that facility of education will lead to indifference to it; and that the universal imposition of education up to the years of maturity will lead to hostility towards it. A high average of general education is perhaps less necessary for a civil society than is a respect for learning.

4. *That Education should be organised so as to give "equality of opportunity."*[66*]

It follows from what has been said in an earlier chapter about classes and élites, that education should help to preserve the class and to select the élite. It is right that the exceptional individual should have the opportunity to elevate himself in the social scale and attain a position in which he can exercise his talents to the greatest benefit of himself and of society. But the ideal of an educational system which would automatically sort out everyone according to his native capacities is unattainable in practice; and if we made it our chief aim, would disorganise society and debase education. It would disorganise society, by substituting for classes, élites of brains, or perhaps only of sharp wits. Any educational system aiming at a complete adjustment between education and society will tend both to restrict education to what will lead to success in the world, and to restrict success in the world to those persons who have been good pupils of the system. The prospect of a society ruled and directed only by those who have passed certain examinations or

satisfied tests devised by psychologists is not reassuring: while it might give scope to talents hitherto obscured, it would probably obscure others, and reduce to impotence some who should have rendered high service. Furthermore, the ideal of a uniform system such that no one capable of receiving higher education could fail to get it, leads imperceptibly to the education of too many people, and consequently to the lowering of standards to whatever this swollen number of candidates is able to reach.

Nothing is more moving in Dr. Joad's treatise than the passage in which he expatiates on the amenities of Winchester and Oxford. Dr. Joad paid a visit to Winchester; and while there, he wandered into a delightful garden. One suspects that he may have got into the garden of the Deanery, but he does not know what garden it was. This garden set him to ruminating about the College, and its "blends of the works of nature and man."[67] "What I see," he said to himself, "is the end-product of a long-continuing tradition, running back through our history, in this particular case, to the Tudors."[68] (I cannot see why he stopped at the Tudors, but that was far enough to sustain the emotion with which his mind was suffused.) It was not only nature and architecture that impressed him; he was aware also of "a long tradition of secure men living dignified and leisured lives."[69] From Winchester his mind passed to Oxford, to the Oxford which he had known as an undergraduate; and again, it was not merely architecture and gardens upon which his mind dwelt, but also men:

> But even in my own time . . . when democracy was already knocking at the gates of the citadel it was so soon to capture, some faint aftermath of the Greek sunset could be observed. At Balliol, in 1911 there was a group of young men centring upon the Grenfells and John Manners, many of whom were killed in the last war, who took it for granted that they should row in the College boat, play hockey or rugger for the College or even for the University, act for the O.U.D.S., get tight at College Gaudies, spend part of the night talking in the company of their friends, while at the same time getting their scholarships and prizes and Firsts in Greats. The First in Greats was taken, as it were, in their stride; [. . .] I have not seen such men before or since. It may be that they were the last representatives of a tradition which died with them. . . . [113]

It seems strange, after these wistful reflections, that Dr. Joad should end his chapter by supporting a proposal of Mr. R. H. Tawney: that the public schools should be taken over by the State and used as boarding schools to

accommodate for two or three years the intellectually abler secondary school boys from the ages of sixteen to eighteen.[70] For the conditions over which he pronounces such a tearful valedictory were not brought about by equality of opportunity. They were not brought about, either, by mere privilege; but by a happy combination of privilege and opportunity, in the *blend* he so savours, of which no Education Act will ever find the secret.

5. *The Mute Inglorious Milton dogma.*[71]

The Equality of Opportunity dogma, which is associated with the belief that superiority is always superiority of intellect, that some infallible method can be designed for the detection of intellect, and that a system can be devised which will infallibly nourish it, derives emotional reinforcement from the belief in the mute inglorious Milton. This myth assumes that a great deal of first-rate ability – not merely ability, but genius – is being wasted for lack of education; or, alternatively, that if even one potential Milton has been suppressed in the course of centuries, from deprivation of formal teaching, it is still worth while to turn education topsy-turvy so that it may not happen again. (It might be embarrassing to have a great many Miltons and Shakespeares, but that danger is remote.) In justice to Thomas Gray, we should remind ourselves of the last and finest line of the quatrain, and remember that we may also have escaped some Cromwell *guilty* of his country's blood.[72] The proposition that we have lost a number of Miltons and Cromwells through our tardiness in providing a comprehensive state system of education, cannot be either proved or disproved: it has a strong attraction for many ardent reforming spirits.

This completes my brief list – which is not intended to be exhaustive – of current beliefs. The dogma of equal opportunity is the most influential of all, and is maintained stoutly by some who would shrink from what seem to me its probable consequences. It is an ideal which can only be fully realised when the institution of the family is no longer respected, and when parental control and responsibility passes to the State. Any system which puts it into effect must see that no advantages of family fortune, no advantages due to the foresight, the self-sacrifice or the ambition of parents are allowed to obtain for any child or young person an education superior to that to which the system finds him to be entitled. The popularity of the belief is perhaps an indication that the depression of the family is accepted, and that the disintegration of classes is far advanced. This disintegration of classes had

already led to an exaggerated estimate of the social importance of the right school and the right college at the right university, as giving a status which formerly pertained to mere birth. In a more articulated society – which is *not* a society in which social classes are isolated from each other: that is itself a kind of decay – the social distinction of the right school or college would not be so coveted, for social position would be marked in other ways. The envy of those who are "better born" than oneself is a feeble velleity, with only a shadow of the passion with which material advantages are envied. No sane person can be consumed with bitterness at not having had more exalted ancestors, for that would be to wish to be another person than the person one is: but the advantage of the status conferred by education at a more fashionable school is one which we can readily imagine ourselves as having enjoyed also. The disintegration of class has induced the expansion of envy, which provides ample fuel for the flame of "equal opportunity."

Besides the motive of giving everyone as much education as possible, because education is in itself desirable, there are other motives affecting educational legislation: motives which may be praiseworthy, or which simply recognise the inevitable, and which we need mention here only as a reminder of the complexity of the legislative problem. One motive, for instance, for raising the age-limit of compulsory schooling, is the laudable desire to protect the adolescent, and fortify him against the more degrading influences to which he is exposed on entering the ranks of industry.[73] We should be candid about such a motive; and instead of affirming what is to be doubted, that everyone will profit by as many years of tuition as we can give him, admit that the conditions of life in modern industrial society are so deplorable, and the moral restraints so weak, that we must prolong the schooling of young people simply because we are at our wits' end to know what to do to save them. Instead of congratulating ourselves on our progress, whenever the school assumes another responsibility hitherto left to parents, we might do better to admit that we have arrived at a stage of civilisation at which the family is irresponsible, or incompetent, or helpless; at which parents cannot be expected to train their children properly; at which many parents cannot afford to feed them properly, and would not know how, even if they had the means; and that Education must step in and make the best of a bad job.[74*]

Mr. D. R. Hardman[75*] observed that:

> The age of industrialism and democracy had brought to an end most of the great cultural traditions of Europe, and not least that of architecture.

> In the contemporary world, in which the majority were half-educated and many not even a quarter educated, and in which large fortunes and enormous power could be obtained by exploiting ignorance and appetite, there was a vast cultural breakdown which stretched from America to Europe and from Europe to the East.

This is true, though there are a few inferences which might be improperly drawn. The exploitation of ignorance and appetite is not an activity only of commercial adventurers making large fortunes: it can be pursued more thoroughly and on a larger scale by governments. The cultural breakdown is not a kind of infection which began in America, spread to Europe, and from Europe has contaminated the East: (Mr. Hardman may not have meant that, but his words might be so interpreted). But what is important is to remember that "half-education" is a modern phenomenon. In earlier ages the majority could not be said to have been "half-educated" or less: people had the education necessary for the functions they were called upon to perform. It would be incorrect to refer to a member of a primitive society, or to a skilled agricultural labourer in any age, as half-educated or quarter-educated or educated to any smaller fraction. *Education* in the modern sense implies a disintegrated society, in which it has come to be assumed that there must be one measure of education according to which everyone is educated simply more or less. Hence *Education* has become an abstraction.

Once we have arrived at this abstraction, remote from life, it is easy to proceed to the conclusion – for we all agree about the "cultural breakdown" – that education for everybody is the means we must employ for putting civilisation together again. Now so long as we mean by "education" everything that goes to form the good individual in a good society, we are in accord, though the conclusion does not appear to get us anywhere; but when we come to mean by "education" that limited system of instruction which the Ministry of Education controls, or aims to control, the remedy is manifestly and ludicrously inadequate. The same may be said of the definition of the purpose of education which we have already found in *The Churches Survey Their Task*. According to this definition, education is the process by which the community attempts to pass on to all its members its culture, including the standards by which it would have them live. The community, in this definition, is an unconscious collective mind, very different from the mind of the Ministry of Education, or the Head Masters' Association, or the mind of any of the numerous bodies concerned with education. If we

include as education all the influences of family and environment, we are going far beyond what professional educators can control – though their sway can extend very far indeed; but if we mean that culture is what is passed on by our elementary and secondary schools, or by our preparatory and public schools, then we are asserting that an organ is a whole organism. For the schools can transmit only a part, and they can only transmit this part effectively, if the outside influences, not only of family and environment, but of work and play, of newsprint and spectacles and entertainment and sport, are in harmony with them.

Error creeps in again and again through our tendency to think of culture as group culture exclusively, the culture of the "cultured" classes and élites. We then proceed to think of the humbler part of society as having culture only in so far as it participates in this superior and more conscious culture. To treat the "uneducated" mass of the population as we might treat some innocent tribe of savages to whom we are impelled to deliver the true faith, is to encourage them to neglect or despise that culture which they should possess and from which the more conscious part of culture draws vitality; and to aim to make everyone share in the appreciation of the fruits of the more conscious part of culture is to adulterate and cheapen what you give. For it is an essential condition of the preservation of the quality of the culture of the minority, that it should continue to be a minority culture. No number of Young People's Colleges will compensate for the deterioration of Oxford and Cambridge, and for the disappearance of that "blend" which Dr. Joad relishes.[76] A "mass-culture" will always be a substitute-culture; and sooner or later the deception will become apparent to the more intelligent of those upon whom this culture has been palmed off.

I am not questioning the usefulness, or deriding the dignity of Young Peoples' Colleges, or of any other particular new construction. In so far as these institutions can be good, they are more likely to be good, and not to deliver disappointment, if we are frankly aware of the limits of what we can do with them, and if we combat the delusion that the maladies of the modern world can be put right by a system of instruction. A measure which is desirable as a palliative, may be injurious if presented as a cure. My main point is the same as that which I tried to make in the previous chapter, when I spoke of the tendency of politics to dominate culture, instead of keeping to its place within a culture. There is also the danger that education – which indeed comes under the influence of politics – will take upon itself the reformation and direction of culture, instead of keeping to its place as one of

the activities through which a culture realises itself. Culture cannot altogether be brought to consciousness; and the culture of which we are wholly conscious is never the whole of culture: the effective culture is that which is directing the activities of those who are manipulating that which they *call* culture.

So the instructive point is this, that the more education arrogates to itself the responsibility, the more systematically will it betray culture. The definition of the purpose of education in *The Churches Survey Their Task* returns to plague us like the laughter of hyaenas at a funeral. *Where that culture is regarded as final, the attempt is made to impose it on younger minds. Where it is viewed as a stage in a development, younger minds are trained to receive it and to* [*criticize and*] *improve upon it* [130]. These are cosseting phrases which reprove our cultural ancestors – including those of Greece, Rome, Italy and France – who had no notion of the extent to which their culture was going to be improved upon after the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State in 1937. We know now that the highest achievements of the past, in art, in wisdom, in holiness, were but "stages in development" which we can teach our springalds to improve upon. We must not train them merely to receive the culture of the past, for that would be to regard the culture of the past as final. We must not impose culture upon the young, though we may impose upon them whatever political and social philosophy is in vogue. And yet the culture of Europe has deteriorated visibly within the memory of many who are by no means the oldest among us. And we know, that whether education can foster and improve culture or not, it can surely adulterate and degrade it. For there is no doubt that in our headlong rush to educate everybody, we are lowering our standards, and more and more abandoning the study of those subjects by which the essentials of our culture – of that part of it which is transmissible by education – are transmitted; destroying our ancient edifices to make ready the ground upon which the barbarian nomads of the future will encamp in their mechanised caravans.

The previous paragraph is to be considered only as an incidental flourish to relieve the feelings of the writer and perhaps of a few of his more sympathetic readers. It is no longer possible, as it might have been a hundred years ago, to find consolation in prophetic gloom; and such a means of escape would betray the intentions of this essay as stated in my introduction. If the reader goes so far as to agree that the kind of organisation of society which I have indicated is likely to be that most favourable to the growth and

survival of a superior culture, he should then consider whether the *means* are themselves desirable as *ends*: for I have maintained that we cannot directly set about to create or improve culture – we can only will the means which are favourable to culture, and to do this we must be convinced that these means are themselves socially desirable. And beyond that point, we must proceed to consider how far these conditions of culture are possible, or even, in a particular situation at a particular time, compatible with all the immediate and pressing needs of an emergency. For one thing to avoid is a *universalised* planning; one thing to ascertain is the limits of the plannable. My enquiry, therefore, has been directed on the meaning of the word *culture*: so that everyone should at least pause to examine what this word means to him, and what it means to him in each particular context before using it. Even this modest aspiration might, if realised, have consequences in the policy and conduct of our "cultural" enterprises.

APPENDIX
The Unity of European Culture[77]

I

This is the first time that I have ever addressed a German-speaking audience, and before speaking on such a large subject, I think that I should present my credentials. For the unity of European culture is a very large subject indeed, and no one should try to speak about it, unless he has some particular knowledge or experience. Then he should start from that knowledge and experience and show what bearing it has on the general subject. I am a poet and a critic of poetry; I was also, from 1922 to 1939, the editor of a quarterly review. In this first talk I shall try to show what the first of these two professions has to do with my subject, and what conclusions my experience has led me to draw. So this is a series of talks about the unity of European culture from the point of view of a man of letters.

It has often been claimed that English, of all the languages of modern Europe, is the richest for the purposes of writing poetry. I think that this claim is justified. But please notice that when I say "richest for the purposes of writing poetry" I have been careful in my words: I do not mean that England has produced the greatest poets, or the greatest amount of great poetry. That is another question altogether. There are as great poets in other languages: Dante is certainly greater than Milton, and at least as great as Shakespeare. And even for the quantity of great poetry, I am not concerned

to maintain that England has produced more. I simply say that the English language is the most remarkable medium for the poet to play with. It has the largest vocabulary: so large, that the command of it by any one poet seems meagre in comparison with its total wealth. But this is not the reason why it is the richest language for poetry: it is only a consequence of the real reason. This reason, in my opinion, is the variety of the elements of which English is made up. First, of course, there is the Germanic foundation, the element that you and we have in common. After this we find a considerable Scandinavian element, due in the first place to the Danish conquest. Then there is the Norman French element, after the Norman conquest. After this there followed a succession of French influences, traceable through words adopted at different periods. The sixteenth century saw a great increase of new words coined from the Latin; and the development of the language from the early sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth, was largely a process of testing new Latin words, assimilating some and rejecting others. And there is another element in English, not so easy to trace, but I think of considerable importance, the Celtic. But I am not thinking, in all this history, only of the Words, I am thinking, for poetry, primarily of the Rhythms. Each of these languages brought its own music: and the richness of the English language for poetry is first of all in its variety of metrical elements. There is the rhythm of early Saxon verse, the rhythm of the Norman French, the rhythm of the Welsh, and also the influence of generations of study of Latin and Greek poetry. And even to-day, the English language enjoys constant possibilities of refreshment from its several centres: apart from the vocabulary, poems by Englishmen, Welshmen, Scots and Irishmen, all written in English, continue to show differences in their Music.

I have not taken the trouble to talk to you in order to praise my own language; my reason for discussing it is that I think the reason why English is such a good language for poetry is that it is a composite from so many different European sources. As I have said, this does not imply that England must have produced the greatest poets. Art, as Goethe said, is in limitation: and a great poet is one who makes the most of the language that is given him. The truly great poet makes his language a great language. It is true, however, that we tend to think of each of the greater peoples as excelling in one art rather than another: Italy and then France in painting, Germany in music, and England in poetry. But, in the first place, no art has ever been the exclusive possession of any one country of Europe. And in the second place, there have been periods in which some other country than England has taken the

lead in poetry. For instance, in the final years of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth, the Romantic movement in English poetry certainly dominated. But in the second half of the nineteenth century the greatest contribution to European poetry was certainly made in France. I refer to the tradition which starts with Baudelaire, and culminates in Paul Valéry. I venture to say that without this French tradition the work of three poets in other languages – and three very different from each other – I refer to W. B. Yeats, to Rainer Maria Rilke, and, if I may, to myself – would hardly be conceivable. And, so complicated are these literary influences, we must remember that this French movement itself owed a good deal to an American of Irish extraction: Edgar Allan Poe. And, even when one country and language leads all others, we must not assume that the poets to whom this is due are necessarily the greatest poets. I have spoken of the Romantic movement in England. But at that time Goethe was writing. I do not know of any standard by which one could gauge the relative greatness of Goethe and Wordsworth as poets, but the total work of Goethe has a scope which makes him a greater man. And no English poet contemporary with Wordsworth can enter into comparison with Goethe at all.

I have been leading up to another important truth about poetry in Europe. This is, that no one nation, no one language, would have achieved what it has, if the same art had not been cultivated in neighbouring countries and in different languages. We cannot understand any one European literature without knowing a good deal about the others. When we examine the history of poetry in Europe, we find a tissue of influences woven to and fro. There have been good poets who knew no language but their own, but even they have been subject to influences taken in and disseminated by other writers among their own people. Now, the possibility of each literature renewing itself, proceeding to new creative activity, making new discoveries in the use of words, depends on two things. First, its ability to receive and assimilate influences from abroad. Second, its ability to go back and learn from its own sources. As for the first, when the several countries of Europe are cut off from each other, when poets no longer read any literature but that in their own language, poetry in every country must deteriorate. As for the second, I wish to make this point especially: that every literature must have some sources which are peculiarly its own, deep in its own history; but, also, and at least equally important, are the sources which we share in common: that is, the literature of Rome, of Greece and of Israel.

There is a question which ought to be asked at this point, and which ought to be answered. What of the influences from outside Europe, of the great literature of Asia?

In the literature of Asia is great poetry. There is also profound wisdom and some very difficult metaphysics; but at the moment I am only concerned with poetry. I have no knowledge whatever of the Arabic, Persian, or Chinese languages. Long ago I studied the ancient Indian languages, and while I was chiefly interested at that time in Philosophy, I read a little poetry too; and I know that my own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility. But generally, poets are not oriental scholars – I was never a scholar myself; and the influence of oriental literature upon poets is usually through translations. That there has been some influence of poetry of the East in the last century and a half is undeniable: to instance only English poetry, and in our own time, the poetical translations from the Chinese made by Ezra Pound, and those made by Arthur Waley, have probably been read by every poet writing in English. It is obvious that through individual interpreters, specially gifted for appreciating a remote culture, every literature may influence every other; and I emphasise this. For when I speak of the unity of European culture, I do not want to give the impression that I regard European culture as something cut off from every other. The frontiers of culture are not, and should not be, closed. But history makes a difference. Those countries which share the most history, are the most important to each other, with respect to their future literature. We have our common classics, of Greece and Rome; we have a common classic even in our several translations of the Bible.

What I have said of poetry is I think true of the other arts as well. The painter or the composer perhaps enjoys greater freedom, in that he is not limited by a particular language spoken only in one part of Europe: but in the practice of every art I think you find the same three elements: the local tradition, the common European tradition, and the influence of the art of one European country upon another. I only put this as a suggestion. I must limit myself to the art which I know most about. In poetry at least, no one country can be consistently highly creative for an indefinite period. Each country must have its secondary epochs, when no remarkable new development takes place: and so the centre of activity will shift to and fro between one country and another. And in poetry there is no such thing as complete originality, owing nothing to the past. Whenever a Virgil, a Dante, a Shakespeare, a Goethe is born, the whole future of European poetry is

altered. When a great poet has lived, certain things have been done once for all, and cannot be achieved again; but, on the other hand, every great poet adds something to the complex material out of which future poetry will be written.

I have been speaking of the unity of European culture as illustrated by the arts and among the arts by the only one on which I am qualified to speak. I want to talk next time about the unity of European culture as illustrated by ideas. I mentioned at the beginning that during the period between the wars I had edited a quarterly review. My experience in this capacity, and my reflections upon it, will provide the starting point for my next talk.

II

I mentioned in my last talk that I had started and edited, between the wars, a literary review. I mentioned it first as one of my qualifications for speaking on this general subject. But also the history of this review illustrates some of the points that I want to make. So I hope that, after I have told you a little about it, you will begin to see its relevance to the subject of these talks.

We produced the first number of this review in the autumn of 1922, and decided to bring it to an end with the first number of the year 1939. So you see that its life covered nearly the same period that we call the years of peace. Except for a period of six months during which I tried the experiment of producing it monthly, its appearance was four times a year. In starting this review, I had the aim of bringing together the best in new thinking and new writing in its time, from all the countries of Europe that had anything to contribute to the common good. Of course it was designed primarily for English readers, and therefore all foreign contributions had to appear in an English translation. There may be a function for reviews published in two or more languages, and in two or more countries simultaneously. But even such reviews, searching all Europe for contributions, must contain some pieces of translation, if they are to be read by everybody. And they cannot take the place of those periodicals which appear in each country and which are intended primarily for the readers in that country. So my review was an ordinary English periodical, only of international scope. I sought, therefore, first to find out who were the best writers, unknown or little known outside of their own country, whose work deserved to be known more widely. Second, I tried to establish relations with those literary periodicals abroad, the aims of which corresponded most nearly to my own. I mention, as instances, the *Nouvelle Revue Française* (then edited by Jacques Rivière,

and subsequently by Jean Paulhan), the *Neue Rundschau*, the *Neue Schweizer Rundschau*, the *Revista de Occidente* in Spain, *Il Convegno* and others in Italy. These connexions developed very satisfactorily, and it was no fault of any of the editors concerned, if they subsequently languished. I am still of the opinion, twenty-three years after I began, and seven years after I ended, that the existence of such a network of independent reviews, at least one in every capital of Europe, is necessary for the transmission of ideas – and to make possible the circulation of ideas while they are still fresh. The editors of such reviews, and if possible the more regular contributors, should be able to get to know each other personally, to visit each other, to entertain each other, and to exchange ideas in conversation. In any one such periodical, of course, there must be much that will be of interest only to readers of its own nation and language. But their co-operation should continually stimulate that circulation of influence of thought and sensibility, between nation and nation in Europe, which fertilises and renovates from abroad the literature of each one of them. And through such co-operation, and the friendships between men of letters which ensue from it, should emerge into public view those works of literature which are not only of local, but of European significance.

The particular point, however, of my talking about my aims, in relation to a review which has been dead for seven years, is that in the end they failed. And I attribute this failure chiefly to the gradual closing of the mental frontiers of Europe. A kind of cultural autarky followed inevitably upon political and economic autarky.[78†] This did not merely interrupt communications: I believe that it had a numbing effect upon creative activity within every country. The blight fell first upon our friends in Italy. And after 1933 contributions from Germany became more and more difficult to find. Some of our friends died; some disappeared; some merely became silent. Some went abroad, cut off from their own cultural roots. One of the latest found and the last lost, was that great critic and good European, who died a few months ago: Theodor Haecker. And, from much of the German writing that I saw in the 30's, by authors previously unknown to me, I formed the opinion that the newer German writers had less and less to say to Europe; that they were more and more saying what could be understood, if understood at all, only in Germany. What happened in Spain is more confused; the tumult of the civil war was hardly favourable to thought and creative writing; and that war divided and scattered, even when it did not destroy, many of her ablest writers. In France there was still free intellectual activity, but more and more harassed and limited by political anxieties and forebodings, and by

the internal divisions which political prepossessions set up. England, though manifesting some symptoms of the same malady, remained apparently intact. But I think that our literature of that period suffered by being more and more restricted to its own resources, as well as by the obsession with politics.

Now the first comment I have to make on this story of a literary review which had clearly failed of its purpose several years before events brought it to an end, is this. A universal concern with politics does not unite, it divides. It unites those politically minded folk who agree, across the frontiers of nations, against some other international group who hold opposed views. But it tends to destroy the cultural unity of Europe. *The Criterion*, for that is the name of the review which I edited, had, I believe, a definite character and cohesion, although its contributors were men holding the most diverse political, social and religious views. I think also that it had a definite congeniality with the foreign periodicals with which it associated itself. The question of a writer's political, social or religious views simply did not enter into our calculations, or into those of our foreign colleagues. What the common basis was, both at home and abroad, is not easy to define. In those days it was unnecessary to formulate it; at the present time it becomes impossible to formulate. I should say that it was a common concern for the highest standards both of thought and of expression, that it was a common curiosity and openness of mind to new ideas. The ideas with which you did not agree, the opinions which you could not accept, were as important to you as those which you found immediately acceptable. You examined them without hostility, and with the assurance that you could learn from them. In other words, we could take for granted an interest, a delight, in ideas for their own sake, in the free play of intellect. And I think that also, among our chief contributors and colleagues, there was something which was not so much a consciously held belief, but an unconscious assumption. Something which had never been doubted, and therefore had no need to rise to the conscious level of affirmation. It was the assumption that there existed an international fraternity of men of letters, within Europe: a bond which did not replace, but was perfectly compatible with, national loyalties, religious loyalties, and differences of political philosophy. And that it was our business not so much to make any particular ideas prevail, as to maintain intellectual activity on the highest level.

I do not think that *The Criterion*, in its final years, wholly succeeded in living up to this ideal. I think that in the later years it tended to reflect a particular point of view, rather than to illustrate a variety of views on that plane.

But I do not think that this was altogether the fault of the editor: I think that it came about partly from the pressure of circumstances of which I have spoken.

I am not pretending that politics and culture have nothing to do with each other. If they could be kept completely apart, the problem might be simpler than it is. A nation's political structure affects its culture, and in turn is affected by that culture. But nowadays we take too much interest in each other's domestic politics, and at the same time have very little contact with each other's culture. The confusion of culture and politics may lead in two different directions. It may make a nation intolerant of every culture but its own, so that it feels impelled to stamp out, or to remould, every culture surrounding it. An error of the Germany of Hitler was to assume that every other culture than that of Germany was either decadent or barbaric. Let us have an end of such assumptions. The other direction in which the confusion of culture and politics may lead, is towards the ideal of a world state in which there will, in the end, be only one uniform world culture. I am not here criticising any schemes for world organisation. Such schemes belong to the plane of engineering, of devising machinery. Machinery is necessary, and the more perfect the machine the better. But culture is something that must grow; you cannot build a tree, you can only plant it, and care for it, and wait for it to mature in its due time; and when it is grown you must not complain if you find that from an acorn has come an oak, and not an elm-tree. And a political structure is partly construction, and partly growth; partly machinery, and the same machinery, if good, is equally good for all peoples; and partly growing with and from the nation's culture, and in that respect different from that of other nations. For the health of the culture of Europe two conditions are required: that the culture of each country should be unique, and that the different cultures should recognise their relationship to each other, so that each should be susceptible of influence from the others. And this is possible because there is a common element in European culture, an interrelated history of thought and feeling and behaviour, an interchange of arts and of ideas.

In my last talk I shall try to define this common element more closely: and I think that will require my saying a little more about the meaning that I give to this word "Culture," which I have been using so constantly.

III

I said at the end of my second talk that I should want to make a little clearer what I mean when I use the term culture. Like "democracy," this is a term

which needs to be, not only defined, but illustrated, almost every time we use it. And it is necessary to be clear about what we mean by "culture," so that we may be clear about the distinction between the material organisation of Europe, and the spiritual organism of Europe. If the latter dies, then what you organise will not be Europe, but merely a mass of human beings speaking several different languages. And there will be no longer any justification for their continuing to speak different languages, for they will no longer have anything to say which cannot be said equally well in any language: they will, in short, have no longer anything to say in poetry. I have already affirmed that there can be no "European" culture if the several countries are isolated from each other: I add now that there can be no European culture if these countries are reduced to identity. We need variety in unity: not the unity of organisation, but the unity of nature.

By "culture," then, I mean first of all what the anthropologists mean: the way of life of a particular people living together in one place. That culture is made visible in their arts, in their social system, in their habits and customs, in their religion. But these things added together do not constitute the culture, though we often speak for convenience as if they did. These things are simply the parts into which a culture can be anatomised, as a human body can. But just as a man is something more than an assemblage of the various constituent parts of his body, so a culture is more than the assemblage of its arts, customs, and religious beliefs. These things all act upon each other, and fully to understand one you have to understand all. Now there are of course higher cultures and lower cultures, and the higher cultures in general are distinguished by differentiation of function, so that you can speak of the less cultured and the more cultured strata of society, and finally, you can speak of individuals as being exceptionally cultured. The culture of an artist or a philosopher is distinct from that of a mine worker or field labourer; the culture of a poet will be somewhat different from that of a politician; but in a healthy society these are all parts of the same culture; and the artist, the poet, the philosopher, the politician and the labourer will have a culture in common, which they do not share with other people of the same occupations in other countries.

Now it is obvious that one unity of culture is that of the people who live together and speak the same language: because speaking the same language means thinking, and feeling, and having emotions, rather differently from people who use a different language. But the cultures of different peoples do affect each other: in the world of the future it looks as if every part of

the world would affect every other part. I have suggested earlier, that the cultures of the different countries of Europe have in the past derived very great benefit from their influence upon each other. I have suggested that the national culture which isolates itself voluntarily, or the national culture which is cut off from others by circumstances which it cannot control, suffers from this isolation. Also, that the country which receives culture from abroad, without having anything to give in return, and the country which aims to impose its culture on another, without accepting anything in return, will both suffer from this lack of reciprocity.

There is something more than a general exchange of culture influences, however. You cannot even attempt to trade equally with every other nation: there will be some who need the kind of goods that you produce, more than others do, and there will be some who produce the goods you need yourselves, and others who do not. So cultures of people speaking different languages can be more or less closely related: and sometimes so closely related that we can speak of their having a common culture. Now when we speak of "European culture," we mean the identities which we can discover in the various national cultures; and of course even within Europe, some cultures are more closely related than others. Also, one culture within a group of cultures can be closely related, on different sides, to two cultures which are not closely related to each other. Your cousins are not all cousins of each other, for some are on the father's side and some on the mother's. Now, just as I have refused to consider the culture of Europe simply as the sum of a number of unrelated cultures in the same area, so I refused to separate the world into quite unrelated cultural groups; I refused to draw any absolute line between East and West, between Europe and Asia. There are, however, certain common features in Europe, which make it possible to speak of a European culture. What are they?

The dominant force in creating a common culture between peoples each of which has its distinct culture, is religion. Please do not, at this point, make a mistake in anticipating my meaning. This is not a religious talk, and I am not setting out to convert anybody. I am simply stating a fact. I am not so much concerned with the communion of Christian believers to-day; I am talking about the common tradition of Christianity which has made Europe what it is, and about the common cultural elements which this common Christianity has brought with it. If Asia were converted to Christianity tomorrow, it would not thereby become a part of Europe. It is in Christianity that our arts have developed; it is in Christianity that the laws of Europe

have – until recently – been rooted. It is against a background of Christianity that all our thought has significance. An individual European may not believe that the Christian Faith is true, and yet what he says, and makes, and does, will all spring out of his heritage of Christian culture and depend upon that culture for its meaning. Only a Christian culture could have produced a Voltaire or a Nietzsche. I do not believe that the culture of Europe could survive the complete disappearance of the Christian Faith. And I am convinced of that, not merely because I am a Christian myself, but as a student of social biology. If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes. Then you must start painfully again, and you cannot put on a new culture ready made. You must wait for the grass to grow to feed the sheep to give the wool out of which your new coat will be made. You must pass through many centuries of barbarism. We should not live to see the new culture, nor would our great-great-great-grandchildren: and if we did, not one of us would be happy in it.

To our Christian heritage we owe many things beside religious faith. Through it we trace the evolution of our arts, through it we have our conception of Roman Law which has done so much to shape the Western World, through it we have our conceptions of private and public morality. And through it we have our common standards of literature, in the literatures of Greece and Rome. The Western world has its unity in this heritage, in Christianity and in the ancient civilisations of Greece, Rome and Israel, from which, owing to two thousand years of Christianity, we trace our descent. I shall not elaborate this point. What I wish to say is, that this unity in the common elements of culture, throughout many centuries, is the true bond between us. No political and economic organisation, however much goodwill it commands, can supply what this culture unity gives. If we dissipate or throw away our common patrimony of culture, then all the organisation and planning of the most ingenious minds will not help us, or bring us closer together.

The unity of culture, in contrast to the unity of political organisation, does not require us all to have only one loyalty: it means that there will be a variety of loyalties. It is wrong that the only duty of the individual should be held to be towards the State; it is fantastic to hold that the supreme duty of every individual should be towards a Super-State. I will give one instance of what I mean by a variety of loyalties. No university ought to be merely a national institution, even if it is supported by the nation. The universities of Europe should have their common ideals, they should have their

obligations towards each other. They should be independent of the governments of the countries in which they are situated. They should not be institutions for the training of an efficient bureaucracy, or for equipping scientists to get the better of foreign scientists; they should stand for the preservation of learning, for the pursuit of truth, and in so far as men are capable of it, the attainment of wisdom.

There is much more that I should have liked to say in this last talk, but I must now be very brief. My last appeal is to the men of letters of Europe, who have a special responsibility for the preservation and transmission of our common culture. We may hold very different political views: our common responsibility is to preserve our common culture uncontaminated by political influences. It is not a question of sentiment: it does not matter so much whether we like each other, or praise each other's writings. What matters is that we should recognise our relationship and mutual dependence upon each other. What matters is our inability, without each other, to produce those excellent works which mark a superior civilisation. We cannot, at present, hold much communication with each other. We cannot visit each other as private individuals; if we travel at all, it can only be through government agencies and with official duties. But we can at least try to save something of those goods of which we are the common trustees; the legacy of Greece, Rome and Israel, and the legacy of Europe throughout the last 2,000 years. In a world which has seen such material devastation as ours, these spiritual possessions are also in imminent peril.

NOTES

1. Epigraph on title page: "DEFINITION: 1. The setting of bounds; limitation (rare) - 1483 – *Oxford English Dictionary*"; separate dedication page: "To Philip Mairet in gratitude and admiration."

The two editors met in Nov 1934 when Mairet (1886-1975) became editor of the *NEW* following the death of A. R. Orage. TSE joined the editorial board and helped identify contributors, while Mairet became one of TSE's most trusted advisers in recommending authors and books for the *Criterion* and Faber. They worked together on the board of the *Christian News-Letter* and as members of the Christendom and Chandos groups for the promotion of a Christian sociology. On the closing of the *Criterion* in 1939, TSE continued to write "A Commentary" in the *NEW* and, from 1940 to 1942, published there the first printing of the last three poems of the *Four Quartets*. In 1943, the two organized what Mairet described as "a series of conversational classes on the nature of culture at St. Anne's House in Soho, when it was opened as a 'House of Christian discourse.' The best result of this experiment in which I seconded him was that it started him on the writing of his *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*." "Memories of T. S. E." in *T. S. Eliot: A Symposium*, ed. Neville Braybrooke (New York: Farrar, Straus &

Cudahy, 1958), 41. In Jan-Feb 1943, TSE published in the *NEW* the four-part "Notes towards a Definition of Culture," which became the basis for chapter I of *NTDC*. Mairet wrote to TSE on 15 Jan 1943 commenting on this essay and again on 3 Feb 1945 offering feedback on "The Class and the Élite," which became the second chapter of *NTDC* (King's P19). TSE continued to write for the *NEW* until Mairet concluded his editorship in 1949.

2. Published on 23 Mar 1962 in the series "Faber Paper Covered Editions"; first printed on 5 Nov 1948 (hereafter *NTDC1948*). For TSE's earliest organization of his ideas on culture in 1941, and their subsequent embodiment in succeeding essays leading to *NTDC*, see "Outline for 'Notes towards a Definition of Culture'" (6.196).

The typescript, with TSE's manuscript corrections, along with the page proofs of pp. 1-16, signed: "Corrected TSE 19.7.48," are in King's (P19).

3. The bibliophile Richard Jennings (1881-1952) was literary editor of the *Daily Mirror*. The error was probably pointed out by the end of 1951, as TSE similarly wrote to Rose McKendry on 12 Dec in response to her request to reprint "The Social Function of Poetry": "I notice in my text one mis-spelling: the word 'autarchy' should read 'autarky.'"

4. TSE refers to his address "To Criticize the Critic," delivered in July 1961, in which he says at the beginning: "In casting an eye over my own literary criticism of the last forty-odd years, I hope that I may be able to draw some conclusions, some plausible generalizations of wider validity, or – what is still more worth while – stimulate other minds to do so; also I hope I may provoke other critics to make similar confessions" (8.456).

5. TSE stated in his preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928): "The general point of view may be described as classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion" (3.513).

6. "Notes towards a Definition of Culture" was printed serially in four parts in the *NEW* of 21 Jan, 28 Jan, 4 Feb, and 11 Feb 1943 (6.343); for "Cultural Forces in the Human Order," see 6.605. For "The Class and the Élite," the early version of the second chapter, see 6.655. An early draft of chapter 4 is on pp. 17-[32] of the fragmentary paper "Church Reunion" (King's P17).

7. Dwight Macdonald, "A Theory of 'Popular Culture,'" *Politics*, 1 (Feb 1944), 20-23. The article is critiqued in "Notes on Mass Culture," *Politics*, 3 (Nov 1946), 353-56, which is signed "European." The American writer and critic Dwight Macdonald (1906-82), one of the editors of the *Partisan Review* from 1937 to 1943, founded and edited the magazine *Politics* from 1944 to 1949. TSE wrote to Philip Mairet on 13 Sept 1946: "While I was in New York I struck up an acquaintance with the editors of two small papers there with which I think it would be worth your while to exchange. . . . The other paper is *Politics* edited by Dwight Macdonald at 45, Astor Place, New York. This is a very different type of paper. Macdonald is a kind of Trotskyite or ex-Trotskyite and seems to me more like George Orwell than anybody else here, inasmuch as he likes to disagree with everybody. This means that he is frequently right though some of his articles about the British Empire are extremely irritating."

8. John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, First Baron Acton in a letter to Richard Simpson, 19 Jan 1859, in *Lord Acton and his Circle*, ed. Abbot Gasquet (London: Burns and Oates, [1906]), 57

9. TSE quotes from the draft constitution published in the *Times Educational Supplement* of 4 Aug 1945 (365). He wrote to the editor of the *TES* in Nov 1945: "neither in the official document . . . have I seen any suggestion that the term *cultural* needs to be defined" (6.696).

10*. TSE's note: "The use of the word *culture*, by those who have not, as it seems to me, pondered deeply on the meaning of the word before employing it, might be illustrated by countless examples. Another instance may suffice. I quote from the *Times Educational Supplement* of November 3, 1945 (522):

> 'Why should we bring into our scheme for international collaboration machinery concerning education and culture?' Such was the question asked by the Prime Minister when, in addressing the delegates of nearly 40 nations attending the United Nations Conference to establish an Educational and Cultural Organization in London on Thursday afternoon, he extended to them the greetings of his Majesty's Government. . . . Mr. Attlee concluded with a plea that if we were to know our neighbours we must understand their culture, through their books, newspapers, radio, and films.

The Minister of Education committed herself to the following:

> Now we are met together: workers in education, in scientific research, and in the varied fields of culture. We represent those who teach, those who discover, those who write, those who express their inspiration in music or in art. . . . Lastly we have culture. Some may argue that the artist, the musician, the writer, all the creative workers in the humanities and the arts, cannot be organized either nationally or internationally. The artist, it has been said, works to please himself. That might have been a tenable argument before the war. But those of us who remember the struggle in the Far East and in Europe in the days preceding the open war know how much the fight against Fascism depended upon the determination of writers and artists to keep their international contacts that they might reach across the rapidly rising frontier barriers.

It is only fair to add, that when it comes to talking nonsense about culture, there is nothing to choose between politicians of one stripe or another. Had the election of 1945 brought the alternative party into power, we should have heard much the same pronouncements in the same circumstances. The pursuit of politics is incompatible with a strict attention to exact meanings on all occasions. The reader should therefore abstain from deriding either Mr. Attlee or the late regretted Miss Wilkinson."

Following Labour's victory at the 1945 general election, Prime Minister Clement Attlee (1883-1967) appointed Ellen Wilkinson (1891-1947) as Minister of Education, the first female MP to hold that position in the United Kingdom.

11*. TSE's note: "In an illuminating supplement to the *Christian News-Letter* of July 24, 1946, Miss Marjorie Reeves has a very suggestive paragraph on 'The Culture of an Industry.' If she somewhat enlarged her meaning, what she says would fit in with my own way of using the word 'culture.' She says, of the culture of an industry, which she believes quite rightly should be presented to the young worker: 'It includes the geography of its raw materials and final markets, its historical evolution, inventions and scientific background, its economics and so forth' [9]. It includes all this, certainly; but an industry, if it is to engage the interest of more than the conscious mind of the worker, should also have a way of life somewhat peculiar to its initiates, with its own forms of festivity and observances. I mention this interesting reminder of the culture of industry, however, as evidence that I am aware of other nuclei of culture than those discussed in this book."

The English historian Marjorie Reeves (1905-2003) was a member of the Moot. TSE wrote to Kathleen Bliss on 2 Feb 1948 that he has "formed a high opinion of Miss Reeves' work."

12*. TSE's note: "I must introduce a parenthetical protest against the abuse of the current term 'social justice.' From meaning 'justice in relations between groups or classes' it may slip into meaning a particular assumption as to what these relations should be; and a course of action might be supported because it represented the aim of 'social justice,' which from the point of view of 'justice' was not just. The term 'social justice' is in danger of losing its rational content – which would be replaced by a powerful emotional charge. I believe that I have used the term myself: it should never be employed unless the user is prepared to define clearly what social justice means to him, and why he thinks it just."

13. "Post-War Forum / Is This an Ideological War?," *Sunday Times*, 31 Dec 1944, 6. Harold Laski's contribution bears the heading: "Yes: War for a New Civilisation."

14*. TSE's note: "For confirmation from a point of view very different from that from which this essay is written, see *Our Threatened Values* by Victor Gollancz ([London: Victor Gollancz] 1946)."

15. In vol 1 of *Primitive Culture* (1871), E. B. Tylor argues that "Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (3rd edn., revised [London: John Murray, 1891], 1). TSE discusses this work in his 1913 graduate essay "The Interpretation of Primitive Ritual" (1.106).

16. In the preface to *Culture and Anarchy* (London: Smith, Elder, 1869), Arnold defines "culture" as "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world" (viii).

17. Arnold uses "three distinct terms, *Barbarians*, *Philistines*, *Populace*, to denote roughly the three great classes into which our society is divided" (105).

18. The Dyaks or (usually) Dayaks are the indigenous inhabitants of Borneo in the South Pacific. By the late nineteenth century, their ritual traditions of headhunting were largely abolished through the influence of Christianity and the injunctions of European colonial powers.

19. TSE appears to be describing the Kula trade ring in and around the Trobriand Archipelago, the subject of Bronisław Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922). By contrast, Layard's *Stone Men of Malekula* (1942) makes clear that no such artisanal specialization was practiced in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), where the natives traded mainly in commodities such as turmeric leaves and pigs. Layard (1891-1974) was a protégé of W. H. R. Rivers and a friend of Auden and Isherwood. Rupert Doone apparently introduced him to TSE in 1939, and TSE published his second book, *The Lady of the Hare*, in 1944 as Layard turned from anthropological to psychological subjects. TSE's source for the cultural practice erroneously attributed here to the "'stone age' New Hebrides" is probably a misunderstood or misremembered conversation in which Layard was speaking of the Trobriands.

20. The "clash of duties" in Sophocles' *Antigone* (ca. 442 BC) arises in the conflict between Creon, king of Thebes, who has ordered that the rebel Polyneices lie unburied, and his niece, Antigone, who has defied Creon's edict and buried Polyneices, her brother. Creon defends the rule of law and the authority of the state; Antigone cites "higher" law and maintains her right to disobey an unjust decree.

21*. TSE's note: "This point is touched upon, though without any discussion of the meaning of 'culture,' by E. H. Carr: *Conditions of Peace*, Part I, ch. iii. He says: '[In] a clumsy but convenient terminology which originated in Central Europe, we must distinguish between "cultural nation"

and "state nation." The existence of a more or less homogeneous racial or linguistic group bound together by a common tradition and the cultivation of a common culture must cease to provide a *prima facie* case for the setting up or the maintenance of an independent political unit' [62]. But Mr. Carr is here concerned with the problem of political unity, rather than with that of the preservation of cultures, or the question whether they are worth preserving, in the political unity."

TSE quotes Carr's *Conditions of Peace* (London: Macmillan, 1942), a book whose focus on "purely political" – as opposed to cultural – problems he criticized in "The Responsibility of the Man of Letters in the Cultural Restoration of Europe" (6.523-24).

22. The inhabitants of the West Indies (i.e., the Caribbean islands) include, in varying admixtures, the descendants of the native peoples, of several European colonial powers, and of the many slaves forcibly imported from Africa.

23. TSE wrote to Conrad Aiken on 25 Feb 1915: "I do not think that I should ever come to like England – a people which is satisfied with such disgusting food *is not* civilised" (*L1* 95).

24. Derby Day, the first Saturday in June, when the Derby Stakes is run at Epsom Downs Racecourse; Henley Royal Regatta and Cowes Week, annual rowing events, the former on the Thames, the latter on the Solent; the "Glorious Twelfth" of Aug, opening of the shooting season for certain game birds; "cup final," the last match in a football (soccer) competition, and particularly in the Football Association Challenge Cup tournament; pin table, apparatus for playing pinball; Wensleydale cheese, made exclusively for several centuries in Wensleydale, North Yorkshire, until the requisitioning of milk and rationing of cheese during World War II permanently damaged the cheese industry there; during the Gothic Revival in the mid-nineteenth century, churches and other buildings in England were designed in the style of medieval Gothic architecture; Edward Elgar, composer of such works as the *Pomp and Circumstance Marches*, the *Enigma Variations*, and the *Cockaigne Overture*.

25. Until the 1960s, black gaiters were part of the traditional uniform of archdeacons and bishops in the Church of England. Membership in the elite Athenaeum Club was similarly conventional or, at any rate, stereotypical, for "higher ecclesiastics."

26*. TSE's note: "I am anxious to avoid speaking as if the evolution of primitive culture to higher forms was a process which we knew by observation. We *observe* the differences, we *infer* that some have developed from a stage similar to that of the lower stages which we observe: but however legitimate our inference, I am here not concerned with that development."

27. TSE's quotations are from a copy of uncorrected page proofs of Karl Mannheim's *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (London: Kegan Paul, 1940), which he reviewed for the *Spectator* in June 1940 (6.74). TSE underlined "those who create culture" in his copy. The passages from pp. 85, 89, and 91, cited later in this chapter, are also marked in the margin. These extracts, as quoted by TSE from the uncorrected proofs, differ slightly in wording and punctuation from the printed text.

28†. In *NTDC1948*: "in a passage which I think contains a profound truth (85):"

29†. In *NTDC1948*: "I now come to another passage in Dr. Mannheim's discussion, which seems to me profoundly true."

30*. TSE's note: "Dr. Mannheim proceeds to call attention to a tendency in mass-society to renounce even the achievement principle [91-92]. This passage is important; but as I agree with him that the dangers from this are still more alarming, it is unnecessary to quote it here."

31*. TSE's note: "Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* gives a hint of something similar."

32*. TSE's note: "To avoid misunderstanding at this point, it should be observed that I do not assume that 'good manners' should be peculiar to any one stratum of society. In a healthy society, good manners should be found throughout. But as we distinguish between the meanings of 'culture' at the several levels, so we distinguish also between the meanings of more and less conscious 'good manners.'"

33†. In *NTDC1948*: "there will be visible"

34*. TSE's note: "I believe that the essential difference between a caste and a class system is that the basis of the former is a difference such that the dominant class comes to consider itself a superior *race*."

35. The "Flight of the Wild Geese" refers to the voluntary exile of approximately 14,000 Jacobite soldiers, who were permitted to leave Ireland to serve in the French and other continental armies under the 1691 Treaty of Limerick.

36. Dent, *Education in Transition: A Sociological Study of the Impact of War on English Education, 1939-1943* (London: Kegan Paul, 1944), 183. The quoted phrase is associated with the provision of comprehensive social services in the welfare state. In *Education in Transition*, Dent uses the expression "from the cradle to the grave" to characterize the program of educational reform developed in his *A New Order in English Education* (1942), which TSE later quotes in chapter VI (7.257).

37. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1926, 290-91. TSE referred to this book in 1926 in "Hooker, Hobbes, and Others" (2.849) and reviewed it the following year in "The Return of Foxy Grandpa" (3.261).

38. *The Admirable Crichton* (1902) is a play by J. M. Barrie set in the household of the British aristocrat Lord Loam. When the family and some friends are shipwrecked on a desert island in the second act, only the butler Crichton has the knowledge and ability to look after the community. He soon assumes the role of master, while Lord Loam and his family become Crichton's subordinates. When the castaways are rescued and return home in the fourth act, subtitled "The Other Island," the original class structure is reestablished.

TSE defined the play as "very pleasant reading" to Bruce Richmond on 13 Oct 1939 and saw a performance with the Fabers, which he described to John Hayward on 15 Dec 1943 as "rather like one by efficient but badly cast amateurs" (King's).

39†. In *NTDC1948*: "which is at peace with other countries:"

40*. TSE's note: "It is not unknown, however, that the successful self-exile sometimes manifests an exaggerated sentiment towards his native region, to which he may return for his holidays, or to enjoy the affluent retirement of his declining years."

41. The Auld Alliance was a military and political alliance between Scotland and France that lasted from 1295 to 1560. It was based on their common desire to curb English expansion.

42*. TSE's note: "It is interesting to speculate, even though we cannot prove our conclusions, what would have happened to Western Europe had the Roman conquest imposed a culture pattern which left the religious beliefs and practices unaffected."

43. In 1943, TSE became involved in the controversy over the South Indian Church Unification Scheme, which he opposed in the *Times* (6.383, 385) and in a pamphlet titled *Reunion by Destruction: Reflections on a Scheme for Church Union in South India: Addressed to the Laity* (London: The Council for the Defence of Church Principles, 1943), in which he aimed "to show that the Scheme is fundamentally unsound; and finally to persuade the reader that its errors . . .

would operate to produce effects which he would regret" (6.447-48). For a discussion of TSE's position against the Scheme, see 6.xxxiii-xxxiv.

44*. TSE's note: "See a valuable article by Professor Evans-Pritchard on 'Social Anthropology' in *Blackfriars* for November 1946. He remarks: 'The answer would seem to be that the sociologist should also be a moral philosopher and that, as such, he should have a set of definite beliefs and values in terms of which he evaluates the facts he studies as a sociologist [414].'"

E. E. (Edward Evan) Evans-Pritchard (1902-73) was professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford from 1946 to 1970.

45*†. TSE's note: "It seems to me highly desirable that there should be close culture contact between devout and practising Christians and devout and practising Jews. Much culture-contact in the past has been within those neutral zones of culture in which religion can be ignored, and between Jews and Gentiles both more or less emancipated from their religious traditions. The effect may have been to strengthen the illusion that there can be culture without religion. In this context I recommend to my readers two books by Professor Will Herberg published in New York: *Judaism and Modern Man* (Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, [1951]) and *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (Doubleday, [1955])."

TSE's note in *NTDC1948*: "Since the diaspora, and the scattering of Jews amongst peoples holding the Christian Faith, it may have been unfortunate both for these peoples and for the Jews themselves, that the culture-contact between them has had to be within those neutral zones of culture in which religion could be ignored: and the effect may have been to strengthen the illusion that there can be culture without religion."

46. Erastianism, named after the sixteenth-century Swiss theologian Thomas Erastus, is the doctrine that asserts the authority of the state over the church in ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

47. The Great Schism of 1054 formally split the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

48. Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 296-373), bishop of Alexandria from 328 to 376, is remembered for his part in the fight against Arianism and Arian leaders, such as bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia (d. 341). TSE seems to have confused Eusebius with Eutyches of Constantinople (ca. 380-456), born after St. Athanasius's death, who argued that the divine and the human natures of Christ were fused into one.

49. Socinianism (OED): "A Christian religious movement and doctrine characterized by antitrinitarianism, rationalism, and denial of the divinity of Jesus."

50*. TSE's note: "See two valuable Supplements to *The Christian News-Letter*: 'Ecumenical Christianity and the Working Classes' by W. G. Symons, July 30, 1941; and 'The Free Churches and Working Class Culture' by John Marsh, May 20, 1942."

51. "Lyttelton" (*Lives*, 503)

52*. TSE's note: "I seem to remember that some such phrase was either attributed to Sir William Vernon Harcourt, or used about him."

Sir William Vernon Harcourt (1827-1904), British Liberal politician; the source of his phrase is untraced. This note in the TS reads: "This phrase, for which I cannot give the reference, was, I believe, either attributed to Sir William Vernon Harcourt, or used about him" (King's P19). TSE wrote in "Rudyard Kipling" (1941): "we can judge only what we understand, and must constantly dine with the opposition" (6.230), and in a letter to the Reverend Sydney Carter on 28 Apr 1943: "It was a maxim of some politician of the last century, I think Sir William Vernon

Harcourt, 'Always dine with the Opposition,' and I have found it a very fruitful admonition to practise."

53*. TSE's note: "*The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 40 [5.704]."

54. *idée reçue* (OED): "A generally accepted notion or opinion"; *mots reçus*: accepted words

55*. TSE's note: "Published by International Publishers, New York. A book which merits republication. It does not give the impression that Trotsky was very sensitive to literature; but he was, from his own point of view, very intelligent about it. Like all his writings, the book is encumbered with discussion of minor Russian personalities of which the foreigner is ignorant and in which he is not interested; but this indulgence in detail, while it contributes a flavour of provinciality, gives the work all the more appearance of genuineness, as having been written rather to speak his mind than with an eye to a foreign audience."

56*. TSE's note: "An interesting survey of the effects of culture-contact in the East is to be found in *The British in Asia* by Guy Wint [London: Faber, 1947]. Mr. Wint's occasional suggestions of the effect of India upon the British are no less suggestive than his account of the effect of the British upon India. For example:

> How the English colour prejudice began – whether it was inherited from the Portuguese in India, or was an infection from the Hindu caste system, or, as it has been suggested, began with the arrival of insular and suburban wives of civil servants, or came from some other cause – is not certain. [. . .] The British in India were the British middle class living in the artificial condition of having above them no upper class of their own people, and below them no lower class of their own people. It was a state of existence which led to a combined arrogance and defensiveness. Pp. 209-10."

Guy Wint (1910-69), British writer and journalist who worked for the *Manchester Guardian*.

57. The OED (1933, vol 3) provides quotations from Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Governour* (1531), Richard Hooker's *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* (1593), and Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1596) to illustrate the first definition. The third is followed by examples from J. S. Mill's *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) and J. E. T. Rogers's *A Manual of Political Economy* (1868), among others.

58. *The Churches Survey their Task: The Report of the Conference at Oxford, July 1937, on Church, Community, and State*, with an introduction by J. H. Oldham (London: Allen & Unwin, 1937), 130. On 16 July 1937, TSE read a paper at the conference entitled "The Church as an Ecumenical Society" (5.497).

59. Dent writes in *A New Order in English Education* (Bickley, Kent: University of London Press, 1942): "We must be prepared to learn from friend and foe. Our ideal is a full democracy" (15).

60. "Actually we answer the question [*What is the purpose of education?*] when we elect for a libertarian conception of democracy." *Education through Art* (London: Faber, 1943), 5.

61. *Education through Art*, 5

62. London: Faber, 1943, 7

63. Read begins his pamphlet *The Education of Free Men* (London: Freedom Press, 1944) thus: "'The true object of education,' wrote William Godwin in the first sentence of his *Enquirer* (1797), 'like that of every other moral process, is the generation of happiness.' I know of no better definition of the aim of education, but like all definitions, it is regressive, throwing us back on the need for further definitions" (4). Read quotes Godwin's "Of Awakening the Mind," *The*

Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners and Literature. In a Series of Essays (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1797), [1].

64. "The Government's purpose in putting forward the reforms described in this Paper is to secure for children a happier childhood and a better start in life" is the opening sentence of *Educational Reconstruction* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1943, 3), the White Paper that heralded the Education Act of 1944, which TSE later discusses in "Lambeth and Education: The Report Criticized" (7.344) and "The Aims of Education" (7.543, 552-53).

65. Joad makes these points when outlining the purposes of education at the beginning of the second chapter of *About Education* (London: Faber, 1945), 23.

66*. TSE's note: "This may be called Jacobinism in Education. Jacobinism, according to one who had given some attention to it, consisted 'in taking the people as equal individuals, without any corporate name or description, without attention to property, without division of powers, and forming the government of delegates from a number of men, so constituted; in destroying or confiscating property, and bribing the public creditors, or the poor, with the spoils, now of one part of the community, now of another, without regard to prescription or profession.' – Burke: *Remarks on the Policy of the Allies*." *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, vol 3 (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855), 416.

67. *About Education*, 90

68. *About Education*, 90-91

69. *About Education*, 91

70. This view by the English critic and historian R. H. (Richard Henry) Tawney (1880-1962) is endorsed by Joad on page 118.

71. "Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest." Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," l. 59

72. "Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood," l. 60

73. The Education Act 1944, named after the Conservative minister R. A. Butler, raised the school-leaving age from 14 to 15.

74*. TSE's note: "I hope, however, that the reader of these lines has read, or will immediately read, *The Peckham Experiment*, as an illustration of what can be done, under modern conditions, to help the family to help itself."

Prompted by concerns over public health, the doctors George Scott Williamson and Innes Hope Pearse opened in 1926 the Pioneer Health Centre in Peckham, south London, where local families were given the opportunity to take part in social, sporting, and cultural activities. The first phase lasted until 1929, and the results of their findings were published in *The Case for Action* (Faber, 1931). The volume TSE refers to, *The Peckham Experiment: A Study in the Living Structure of Society* by Innes H. Pearse and Lucy H. Crocker (London: Allen and Unwin, 1943), focused on the second phase of the experiment. TSE wrote to Robert Giroux on 24 Oct 1949: "I regard it as a book of some importance."

75*. TSE's note: "As Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education, speaking on January 12, 1946, at the general meeting of the Middlesex Head Teachers' Association."

David Rennie Hardman (1901-89), British Labour MP for Darlington in Clement Attlee's government. A revised version of this statement, pronounced by Hardman at the Third Annual Meeting of the Council for Visual Education on 30 Apr 1946, is printed in "Educational Meetings," *The Journal of Education*, 78 (Aug 1946), 456.

76. Clause 41 of the Education Bill discussed in Parliament in June 1944 states: "it shall be the duty of every local education authority to establish and maintain young people's colleges, that is to say, centres approved by the Minister for providing for young persons who are not in full time attendance at any school or other educational institution such further education, including physical practical and vocational training, as will enable them to develop their various aptitudes and capacities and will prepare them for the responsibilities of citizenship" (Education Bill, HL Deb, 27 June 1944, vol 132, c441). This clause was modified in the 1944 Education Act to read: "it shall be the duty of every local education authority to secure the provision for their area of adequate facilities for further education." The term "young people's colleges" was dropped following opposition from some MPs who found it patronizing and sanctimonious.

77. For the annotated version of these broadcasts, see 6.709.

78†. In *NTDC1948*: "autarchy" in both instances

Tribute to Hugh MacDiarmid[1]

The Voice of Scotland, 5 (Dec 1948) 21

[As I cannot be present, I should like to send my Greetings to Hugh MacDiarmid and to the Makars assembled to do him honour. There are two reasons why I should have wished to be present on this occasion. The first is my respect for the great contribution of the poet to poetry – in general – in my time; the second is my respect for his contribution to Scottish poetry – in particular. I value the latter for two reasons. While I must admit that Lallans is a language which I read with difficulty and the subtleties of which I will never master, I can nevertheless enjoy it, and I am convinced that many things can be said, in poetry, in that language that cannot be expressed at all in English.[2] The second reason follows from the first; I think that Scots poetry is, like that of other Western European languages, a potentially fertilising influence upon English poetry, and that it is to the interest of English poetry that Scots poetry should flourish.]

It is uncontested, and now everywhere recognised, that Hugh MacDiarmid's refusal to become merely another successful English poet, and his pursuing a course which at first some of his admirers deplored and some of his detractors derided, has had important consequences and has justified itself. It will eventually be admitted that he has done more also for English poetry, by committing some of his finest verse to Scots, than if he had elected to write exclusively in the Southern dialect.

NOTES

1. At the beginning of this letter of 15 Aug 1948 to Scots poet A. D. (Albert David) Mackie, TSE regretted that owing to preparations for his forthcoming visit to America in Sept he could not personally attend the honorific occasion for the Scots poet and nationalist Hugh MacDiarmid (pseudonym of C. M. Grieve, 1892-1978). Mackie (1904-85) was chairman of the Makars Club, a group of poets writing in Lallans (Lowland Scots).

As leader of the Lallans movement and editor of the *Voice of Scotland* (1938-58), MacDiarmid later explained to Kulgin Duval in a letter of Aug 1964 that TSE's tribute "was sent on the occasion in 1948 [28 Aug] of the presentation to me of my portrait by David Foggie in the Scotia Hotel, and the text of it was printed in the *Voice of Scotland*'s account of that affair. A. D. Mackie . . . was in the chair and . . . read out that letter . . . I had the loan of it – in order to copy it out for the ensuing *Voice of Scotland*" (Gallup 182). "And nou gin ye will lat me quote a word or twa in the Suddron tongue," Mackie addressed his fellow Makars. "I hae a letter frae T. S. Eliot, the Suddron

poet, that beirs out what I feel mysel, and it's whar I differ frae the mystique o MacDiarmid and his notion that nae Scot ever did oniething o consequence in English. I am sure, and sae is Eliot, that MacDiarmid himsel has a richt to be countit amang the foremaist writers o English the day, and here's what Eliot has to say on that maitter:" Mackie may then have read out the full tribute, the first paragraph of which appears in brackets here, though only the second paragraph was printed in the Dec issue of the *Voice of Scotland*. The full tribute was later published in *Selected Poems of Hugh MacDiarmid*, ed. Oliver Brown (Glasgow: William MacLellan, 1954), 63. The original TS of the letter is in the Edinburgh University Library.

2. MacDiarmid attempted to revitalize Scots through literary Lallans in his early volumes – *Sangschaw* (1925), *Penny Wheep* (1926), and his best-known *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1926) – after which his poetry gave way to standard English. In the *Criterion* of July 1931, TSE published (under C. M. Grieve) MacDiarmid's essay "British Ascendancy in British Literature" (593-613), which aims to show how the unique qualities of regional/national languages in the United Kingdom (Scots, Welsh, Gaelic) were suppressed by the dominance of English-language literature. TSE later wrote to Richard Church on 21 Aug 1963: "I am delighted to know that you and I see eye to eye about C. M. Grieve, otherwise Hugh MacDiarmid. My own feeling about the modern synthetic Lallans is that it has produced a group of second-rate versifiers" (Ransom).

From Poe to Valéry

New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1948. Pp. 32.[1]

What I attempt here is not a judicial estimate of Edgar Allan Poe; I am not trying to decide his rank as a poet or to isolate his essential originality. Poe is indeed a stumbling block for the judicial critic. If we examine his work in detail, we seem to find in it nothing but slipshod writing, puerile thinking unsupported by wide reading or profound scholarship, haphazard experiments in various types of writing, chiefly under pressure of financial need, without perfection in any detail. This would not be just. But if, instead of regarding his work analytically, we take a distant view of it as a whole, we see a mass of unique shape and impressive size to which the eye constantly returns. Poe's influence is equally puzzling. In France the influence of his poetry and of his poetic theories has been immense. In England and America it seems almost negligible. Can we point to any poet whose style appears to have been formed by a study of Poe? The only one whose name immediately suggests itself is – Edward Lear. And yet one cannot be sure that one's own writing has *not* been influenced by Poe. I can name positively certain poets whose work has influenced me, I can name others whose work, I am sure, has not; there may be still others of whose influence I am unaware, but whose influence I might be brought to acknowledge: but about Poe I shall never be sure. He wrote very few poems, and of those few only half a dozen have had a great success: but those few are as well known to as large a number of people, are as well remembered by everybody, as any poems ever written. And some of his tales have had an important influence upon authors, and in types of writing where such influence would hardly be expected.

I shall here make no attempt to explain the enigma. At most, this is a contribution to the study of his influence; and an elucidation, partial as it may be, of one cause of Poe's importance in the light of that influence. I am trying to look at him, for a moment, as nearly as I can, through the eyes of three French poets, Baudelaire, Mallarmé and especially Paul Valéry. The sequence is itself important. These three French poets represent the beginning, the middle and the end of a particular tradition in poetry. Mallarmé once told a friend of mine that he came to Paris because he wanted to know

Baudelaire; that he had once seen him at a bookstall on a quai, but had not had the courage to accost him. As for Valéry, we know from his first letter to Mallarmé, written when he was hardly more than a boy, of his discipleship of the elder poet; and we know of his devotion to Mallarmé until Mallarmé's death.[2] Here are three literary generations, representing almost exactly a century of French poetry. Of course, these are poets very different from each other; of course, the literary progeny of Baudelaire was numerous and important, and there are other lines of descent from him. But I think we can trace the development and descent of one particular theory of the nature of poetry through these three poets: and it is a theory which takes its origin in the theory, still more than in the practice, of Edgar Poe. And the impression we get of the influence of Poe is the more impressive, because of the fact that Mallarmé, and Valéry in turn, did not merely derive from Poe through Baudelaire: each of them subjected himself to that influence directly, and has left convincing evidence of the value which he attached to the theory and practice of Poe himself. Now, we all of us like to believe that we understand our own poets better than any foreigner can do; but I think we should be prepared to entertain the possibility that these Frenchmen have seen something in Poe that English-speaking readers have missed.

My subject, then, is not simply Poe but Poe's effect upon three French poets, representing three successive generations; and my purpose is also to approach an understanding of a peculiar attitude towards poetry, by the poets themselves, which is perhaps the most interesting, possibly the most characteristic, and certainly the most original development of the esthetic of verse made in that period as a whole. It is all the more worthy of examination if, as I incline to believe, this attitude towards poetry represents a phase which has come to an end with the death of Valéry.[3] For our study of it should help towards the understanding of whatever it may be that our generation and the next will find to take its place.

Before concerning myself with Poe as he appeared in the eyes of these French poets, I think it as well to present my own impression of his status among American and English readers and critics; for, if I am wrong, you may have to criticise what I say of his influence in France with my errors in mind. It does not seem to me unfair to say that Poe has been regarded as a minor, or secondary, follower of the Romantic Movement: a successor to the so-called "Gothic" novelists in his fiction, and a follower of Byron and Shelley in his verse. This however is to place him in the English tradition;

and there certainly he does not belong. English readers sometimes account for that in Poe which is outside of any English tradition, by saying that it is American; but this does not seem to me wholly true either, especially when we consider the other American writers of his own and an earlier generation. There is a certain flavour of provinciality about his work, in a sense in which Whitman is not in the least provincial: it is the provinciality of the person who is not at home where he belongs, but cannot get to anywhere else. Poe is a kind of displaced European; he is attracted to Paris, to Italy and to Spain, to places which he could endow with romantic gloom and grandeur.[4] Although his ambit of movement hardly extended beyond the limits of Richmond and Boston longitudinally, and neither east nor west of these centres, he seems a wanderer with no fixed abode.[5] There can be few authors of such eminence who have drawn so little from their own roots, who have been so isolated from any surroundings.

I believe the view of Poe taken by the ordinary cultivated English or American reader is something like this: Poe is the author of a few, a very few short poems which enchanted him for a time when he was a boy, and which do somehow stick in the memory. I do not think that he re-reads these poems, unless he turns to them in the pages of an anthology; his enjoyment of them is rather the memory of an enjoyment which he may for a moment recapture. They seem to him to belong to a particular period when his interest in poetry had just awakened. Certain images, and still more certain rhythms, abide with him. This reader also remembers certain of the tales – not very many – and holds the opinion that *The Gold Bug* was quite good for its time, but that detective fiction has made great strides since then.[6] And he may sometimes contrast him with Whitman, having frequently re-read Whitman, but not Poe.

As for the prose, it is recognised that Poe's tales had great influence upon some types of popular fiction. So far as detective fiction is concerned, nearly everything can be traced to two authors: Poe and Wilkie Collins. The two influences sometimes occur, but are also responsible for two different types of detective. The efficient professional policeman originates with Collins, the brilliant and eccentric amateur with Poe.[7] Conan Doyle owes much to Poe, and not merely to Monsieur Dupin of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*.[8] Sherlock Holmes was deceiving Watson when he told him that he had bought his Stradivarius violin for a few shillings at a second-hand shop in the Tottenham Court Road. He found that violin in the

ruins of the house of Usher. There is a close similarity between the musical exercises of Holmes and those of Roderick Usher: those wild and irregular improvisations which, while on one occasion they sent Watson off to sleep, must have been excruciating to any ear trained to music.[9] It seems to me probable that the romances of improbable and incredible adventure of Rider Haggard found their inspiration in Poe – and Haggard himself had imitators enough. I think it equally likely that H. G. Wells, in his early romances of scientific exploration and invention, owed much to the stimulus of some of Poe's narratives – *Gordon Pym*, or *A Descent into the Maelstrom* for example, or *The Facts in the Case of Monsieur Valdemar*.[10] The compilation of evidence I leave to those who are interested to pursue the enquiry. But I fear that nowadays too few readers open *She* or *The War of the Worlds* or *The Time Machine*: fewer still are capable of being thrilled by their predecessors.[11]

What strikes me first, as a general difference between the way in which the French poets whom I have cited took Poe, and the way of American and English critics of equivalent authority, is the attitude of the former towards Poe's *œuvre*, towards his work as a whole. Anglo-Saxon critics are, I think, more inclined to make separate judgements of the different parts of an author's work. We regard Poe as a man who dabbled in verse and in several kinds of prose, without settling down to make a thoroughly good job of any one *genre*. These French readers were impressed by the variety of form of expression, because they found, or thought they found, an essential unity; while admitting, if necessary, that much of the work is fragmentary or occasional, owing to circumstances of poverty, frailty and vicissitude, they nevertheless take him as an author of such seriousness that his work must be grasped as a whole. This represents partly a difference between two kinds of critical mind; but we must claim, for our own view, that it is supported by our awareness of the blemishes and imperfections of Poe's actual writing. It is worth while to illustrate these faults, as they strike an English-speaking reader.

Poe had, to an exceptional degree, the feeling for the incantatory element in poetry, of that which may, in the most nearly literal sense, be called "the magic of verse." His versification is not, like that of the greatest masters of prosody, of the kind which yields a richer melody, through study and long habituation, to the maturing sensibility of the reader returning to it at times

throughout his life. Its effect is immediate and undeveloping; it is probably much the same for the sensitive schoolboy and for the ripe mind and cultivated ear. In this unchanging immediacy, it partakes perhaps more of the character of very good *verse* than of poetry – but that is to start a hare which I have no intention of following here, for it is, I am sure, "poetry" and not "verse." It has the effect of an incantation which, because of its very crudity, stirs the feelings at a deep and almost primitive level. But, in his choice of the word which has the right *sound*, Poe is by no means careful that it should have also the right *sense*. I will give one comparison of uses of the same word by Poe and by Tennyson – who, of all English poets since Milton, had probably the most accurate and fastidious appreciation of the sound of syllables. In Poe's *Ulalume* – to my mind one of his most successful, as well as typical, poems – we find the lines

> It was night, in the lonesome October
> Of my most immemorial year.[12]

Immemorial, according to the Oxford Dictionary, means: "that is beyond memory or out of mind; ancient beyond memory or record: extremely old." None of these meanings seems applicable to this use of the word by Poe. The year was not beyond memory – the speaker remembers one incident in it very well; at the conclusion he even remembers a funeral in the same place just a year earlier.[13] The line of Tennyson, equally well-known, and justly admired because the sound of the line responds so well to the sound which the poet wishes to evoke, may already have come to mind:

> The moan of doves in immemorial elms.[14]

Here *immemorial*, besides having the most felicitous sound value, is exactly the word for trees so old that no one knows just how old they are.

Poetry, of different kinds, may be said to range from that in which the attention of the reader is directed primarily to the sound, to that in which it is directed primarily to the sense. With the former kind, the sense may be apprehended almost unconsciously; with the latter kind – at these two extremes – it is the sound, of the operation of which upon us we are unconscious. But, with either type, sound and sense must cooperate; in even the most purely incantatory poem, the dictionary meaning of words cannot be disregarded with impunity.

An irresponsibility towards the meaning of words is not infrequent with Poe. *The Raven* is, I think, far from being Poe's best poem; though, partly because of the analysis which the author gives in *The Philosophy of Composition*, it is the best known.

In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore,[15]

Since there is nothing particularly saintly about the raven, if indeed the ominous bird is not wholly the reverse, there can be no point in referring his origin to a period of saintliness, even if such a period can be assumed to have existed. We have just heard the raven described as *stately*; but we are told presently that he is *ungainly*, an attribute hardly to be reconciled, without a good deal of explanation, with *stateliness*.[16] Several words in the poem seem to be inserted either merely to fill out the line to the required measure, or for the sake of a rhyme. The bird is addressed as "no craven" quite needlessly, except for the pressing need of a rhyme to "raven" – a surrender to the exigencies of rhyme with which I am sure Malherbe would have had no patience.[17] And there is not always even such schoolboy justification as this: to say that the lamplight "gloated o'er" the sofa cushions is a freak of fancy which, even were it relevant to have a little gloating going on somewhere, would appear forced.[18]

Imperfections in *The Raven* such as these – and one could give others – may serve to explain why *The Philosophy of Composition*, the essay in which Poe professes to reveal his method in composing *The Raven* – has not been taken so seriously in England or America as in France. It is difficult for us to read that essay without reflecting, that if Poe plotted out his poem with such calculation, he might have taken a little more pains over it: the result hardly does credit to the method. Therefore we are likely to draw the conclusion that Poe in analysing his poem was practising either a hoax, or a piece of self-deception in setting down the way in which he wanted to think that he had written it. Hence the essay has not been taken so seriously as it deserves.

Poe's other essays in poetic esthetic deserve consideration also. No poet, when he writes his own *art poétique*, should hope to do much more than explain, rationalise, defend or prepare the way for his own practice: that is, for writing his own kind of poetry. He may think that he is establishing laws for all poetry; but what he has to say that is worth saying has its immediate relation to the way in which he himself writes or wants to write: though it may well be equally valid to his immediate juniors, and extremely helpful

to them. We are only safe in finding, in his writing about poetry, principles valid for any poetry, so long as we check what he says by the kind of poetry he writes. Poe has a remarkable passage about the impossibility of writing a long poem – for a long poem, he holds, is at best a series of short poems strung together.[19] What we have to bear in mind is that he himself was incapable of writing a long poem. He could conceive only a poem which was a single simple effect: for him, the whole of a poem had to be in one mood.[20] Yet it is only in a poem of some length that a variety of moods can be expressed; for a variety of moods requires a number of different themes or subjects, related either in themselves or in the mind of the poet. These parts can form a whole which is more than the sum of the parts; a whole such that the pleasure we derive from the reading of any part is enhanced by our grasp of the whole. It follows also that in a long poem some parts may be deliberately planned to be less "poetic" than others: these passages may show no lustre when extracted, but may be intended to elicit, by contrast, the significance of other parts, and to unite them into a whole more significant than any of the parts. A long poem may gain by the widest possible variations of intensity. But Poe wanted a poem to be of the first intensity throughout: it is questionable whether he could have appreciated the more philosophical passages in Dante's *Purgatorio*.[21] What Poe had said has proved in the past of great comfort to other poets equally incapable of the long poem; and we must recognise that the question of the possibility of writing a long poem is not simply that of the strength and staying power of the individual poet, but may have to do with the conditions of the age in which he finds himself. And what Poe has to say on the subject is illuminating, in helping us to understand the point of view of poets for whom the long poem is impossible.

The fact that for Poe a poem had to be the expression of a single mood – it would here be too long an excursus to try to demonstrate that *The Bells*, as a deliberate exercise in several moods, is as much a poem of one mood as any of Poe's – this fact can better be understood as a manifestation of a more fundamental weakness.[22] Here, what I have to say I put forward only tentatively: but it is a view which I should like to launch in order to see what becomes of it. My account may go to explain, also, why the work of Poe has for many readers appealed at a particular phase of their growth, at the period of life when they were just emerging from childhood. That Poe had a powerful intellect is undeniable: but it seems to me the intellect of a highly gifted

young person before puberty. The forms which his lively curiosity takes are those in which a pre-adolescent mentality delights: wonders of nature and of mechanics and of the supernatural, cryptograms and cyphers, puzzles and labyrinths, mechanical chess-players and wild flights of speculation. The variety and ardour of his curiosity delight and dazzle; yet in the end the eccentricity and lack of coherence of his interests tire. There is just that lacking which gives dignity to the mature man: a consistent view of life. An attitude can be mature and consistent, and yet be highly sceptical: but Poe was no sceptic. He appears to yield himself completely to the idea of the moment: the effect is, that all of his ideas seem to be *entertained* rather than believed. What is lacking is not brain power, but that maturity of intellect which comes only with the maturing of the man as a whole, the development and coordination of his various emotions. I am not concerned with any possible psychological or pathological explanation: it is enough for my purpose to record that the work of Poe is such as I should expect of a man of very exceptional mind and sensibility, whose emotional development has been in some respect arrested at an early age. His most vivid imaginative realisations are the realisation of a dream: significantly, the ladies in his poems and tales are always ladies lost, or ladies vanishing, before they can be embraced. Even in *The Haunted Palace*, where the subject appears to be his own weakness of alcoholism, the disaster has no moral significance; it is treated impersonally as an isolated phenomenon; it has not behind it the terrific force of such lines as those of François Villon when he speaks of his own fallen state.[23]

Having said as much as this about Poe, I must proceed to enquire what it was that three great French poets found in his work to admire, which we have not found. We must first take account of the fact that none of these poets knew the English language very well. Baudelaire must have read a certain amount of English and American poetry: he certainly borrows from Gray, and apparently from Emerson.[24] He was never familiar with England, and there is no reason to believe that he spoke the language at all well. As for Mallarmé, he taught English and there is convincing evidence of his imperfect knowledge, for he committed himself to writing a kind of guide to the use of the language. An examination of this curious treatise, and the strange phrases which he gives under the impression that they are familiar English proverbs, should dispel any rumour of Mallarmé's English

scholarship.[25] As for Valéry, I never heard him speak a word of English, even in England. I do not know what he had read in our language: Valéry's second language, the influence of which is perceptible in some of his verse, was Italian.[26]

It is certainly possible, in reading something in a language imperfectly understood, for the reader to find what is not there; and when the reader is himself a man of genius, the foreign poem read may, by a happy accident, elicit something important from the depths of his own mind, which he attributes to what he reads. And it is true that in translating Poe's prose into French, Baudelaire effected a striking improvement: he transformed what is often a slipshod and a shoddy English prose into admirable French.[27] Mallarmé, who translated a number of Poe's poems into French prose, effected a similar improvement: but on the other hand, the rhythms, in which we find so much of the originality of Poe, are lost.[28] The evidence that the French overrated Poe because of their imperfect knowledge of English remains accordingly purely negative: we can venture no farther than saying that they were not disturbed by weaknesses of which we are very much aware. It does not account for their high opinion of Poe's *thought*, for the value which they attached to his philosophical and critical exercises. To understand that we must look elsewhere.

We must, at this point, avoid the error of assuming that Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Valéry all responded to Poe in exactly the same way. They are great poets, and they are each very different from the other; furthermore, they represent, as I have reminded you, three different generations. It is with Valéry that I am here chiefly concerned. I therefore say only that Baudelaire, to judge by his introduction to his translation of the tales and essays, was the most concerned with the personality of the man.[29] With the accuracy of his portrait I am not concerned: the point is that in Poe, in his life, his isolation and his worldly failure, Baudelaire found the prototype of *le poète maudit*, the poet as the outcast of society – the type which was to realise itself, in different ways, in Verlaine and Rimbaud, the type of which Baudelaire saw himself as a distinguished example.[30] This nineteenth-century archetype, *le poète maudit*, the rebel against society and against middle-class morality (a rebel who descends of course from the continental myth of the figure of Byron) corresponds to a particular social situation. But, in the course of an introduction which is primarily a sketch of the man Poe and his biography, Baudelaire lets fall one remark indicative of an esthetic that brings us to Valéry:

> He believed [says Baudelaire], true poet that he was, that the goal of poetry is of the same nature as its principle, and that it should have nothing in view but itself.[31]

"A poem does not say something – it *is* something": that doctrine has been held in more recent times.[32]

The interest for Mallarmé is rather in the technique of verse, though Poe's is, as Mallarmé recognises, a kind of versification which does not lend itself to use in the French language. But when we come to Valéry, it is neither the man nor the poetry, but the *theory* of poetry, that engages his attention. In a very early letter to Mallarmé, written when he was a very young man, introducing himself to the elder poet, he says: "I prize the theories of Poe, so profound and so insidiously learned; I believe in the omnipotence of rhythm, and especially in the suggestive phrase."[33] But I base my opinion, not primarily upon this credo of a very young man, but upon Valéry's subsequent theory and practice. In the same way that Valéry's poetry, and his essays on the art of poetry, are two aspects of the same interest of his mind and complement each other, so for Valéry the poetry of Poe is inseparable from Poe's poetic theories.

This brings me to the point of considering the meaning of the term "la poésie pure": the French phrase has a connotation of discussion and argument which is not altogether rendered by the term "pure poetry."

All poetry may be said to start from the emotions experienced by human beings in their relations to themselves, to each other, to divine beings, and to the world about them; it is therefore concerned also with thought and action, which emotion brings about, and out of which emotion arises. But, at however primitive a stage of expression and appreciation, the function of poetry can never be simply to arouse these same emotions in the audience of the poet. You remember the account of Alexander's feast in the famous ode of Dryden. If the conqueror of Asia was actually transported with the violent emotions which the bard Timotheus, by skilfully varying his music, is said to have aroused in him, then the great Alexander was at the moment suffering from automatism induced by alcohol poisoning, and was in that state completely incapable of appreciating musical or poetic art.[34] In the earliest poetry, or in the most rudimentary enjoyment of poetry, the attention of the listener is directed upon the subject matter; the effect of the poetic art is felt,

without the listener being wholly conscious of this art. With the development of the consciousness of language, there is another stage, at which the auditor, who may by that time have become the reader, is aware of a double interest in a story for its own sake, and in the way in which it is told: that is to say, he becomes aware of style. Then we may take a delight in discrimination between the ways in which different poets will handle the same subject: an appreciation not merely of better or worse, but of differences between styles which are equally admired. At a third stage of development, the subject may recede to the background: instead of being the purpose of the poem, it becomes simply a necessary means for the realisation of the poem. At this stage the reader or listener may become as nearly indifferent to the subject matter as the primitive listener was to the style. A complete unconsciousness or indifference to the style at the beginning, or to the subject matter at the end, would however take us outside of poetry altogether: for a complete unconsciousness of anything but subject matter would mean that for that listener poetry had not yet appeared; a complete unconsciousness of anything but style would mean that poetry had vanished.

This process of increasing self-consciousness – or, we may say, of increasing consciousness of language – has as its theoretical goal what we may call *la poésie pure*. I believe it to be a goal that can never be reached, because I think that poetry is only poetry so long as it preserves some "impurity" in this sense: that is to say, so long as the subject matter is valued for its own sake. The Abbé Brémond, if I have understood him, maintains that while the element of *la poésie pure* is necessary to make a poem a poem, no poem can consist of *la poésie pure* solely.[35] But what has happened in the case of Valéry is a change of attitude toward the subject matter. We must be careful to avoid saying that the subject matter becomes "less important." It has rather a different kind of importance: it is important as *means*: the *end* is the poem. The subject exists for the poem, not the poem for the subject. A poem may employ several subjects, combining them in a particular way; and it may be meaningless to ask "What is the subject of the poem?" From the union of several subjects there appears, not another subject, but the poem.

Here I should like to point out the difference between a theory of poetry propounded by a student of esthetics, and the same theory as held by a poet. It is one thing when it is simply an account of how the poet writes, without knowing it, and another thing when the poet himself writes consciously

according to that theory. In affecting writing, the theory becomes a different thing from what it was merely as an explanation of how the poet writes. And Valéry was a poet who wrote very consciously and deliberately indeed: perhaps, at his best, not wholly under the guidance of theory; but his theorising certainly affected the kind of poetry that he wrote. He was the most self-conscious of all poets.

To the extreme self-consciousness of Valéry must be added another trait: his extreme scepticism. It might be thought that such a man, without belief in anything which could be the subject of poetry, would find refuge in a doctrine of "art for art's sake." But Valéry was much too sceptical to believe even in art. It is significant, the number of times that he describes something he has written as an *ébauche* – a rough draft.[36] He had ceased to believe in *ends*, and was only interested in *processes*. It often seems as if he had continued to write poetry, simply because he was interested in the introspective observation of himself engaged in writing it: one has only to read the several essays – sometimes indeed more exciting than his verse, because one suspects that he was more excited in writing them – in which he records his observations. There is a revealing remark in *Variété V*, the last of his books of collected papers: "As for myself, who am, I confess, much more concerned with the formation or the fabrication of works [of art] than with the works themselves," and, a little later in the same volume: "In my opinion the most authentic philosophy is not in the objects of reflection, so much as in the very act of thought and its manipulation."[37]

Here we have, brought to their culmination by Valéry, two notions which can be traced back to Poe. There is first the doctrine, elicited from Poe by Baudelaire, which I have already quoted: "A poem should have nothing in view but itself"; second the notion that the composition of a poem should be as conscious and deliberate as possible, that the poet should observe himself in the act of composition – and this, in a mind as sceptical as Valéry's, leads to the conclusion, so paradoxically inconsistent with the other, that the act of composition is more interesting than the poem which results from it.

First, there is the "purity" of Poe's poetry. In the sense in which we speak of "purity of language" Poe's poetry is very far from pure, for I have commented upon Poe's carelessness and unscrupulousness in the use of words. But in the sense of *la poésie pure*, that kind of purity came easily to Poe. The subject is little, the treatment is everything. He did not have to achieve purity by a process of purification, for his material was already

tenuous. Second, there is that defect in Poe to which I alluded when I said that he did not appear to believe, but rather to entertain, theories. And here again, with Poe and Valéry, extremes meet, the immature mind playing with ideas because it had not developed to the point of convictions, and the very adult mind playing with ideas because it was too sceptical to hold convictions. It is by this contrast, I think, that we can account for Valéry's admiration for *Eureka* – that cosmological fantasy which makes no deep impression upon most of us, because we are aware of Poe's lack of qualification in philosophy, theology or natural science, but which Valéry, after Baudelaire, esteemed highly as a "prose poem."[38] Finally, there is the astonishing result of Poe's analysis of the composition of *The Raven*. It does not matter whether *The Philosophy of Composition* is a hoax, or a piece of self-deception, or a more or less accurate record of Poe's calculations in writing the poem; what matters is that it suggested to Valéry a method and an occupation – that of observing himself write. Of course, a greater than Poe had already studied the poetic process. In the *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge is concerned primarily, of course, with the poetry of Wordsworth; and he did not pursue his philosophical enquiries concurrently with the writing of his poetry; but he does anticipate the question which fascinated Valéry: "What am I doing when I write a poem?" Yet Poe's *Philosophy of Composition* is a *mise au point* of the question which gives it capital importance in relation to this process which ends with Valéry. For the penetration of the poetic by the introspective critical activity is carried to the limit by Valéry, the limit at which the latter begins to destroy the former. M. Louis Bolle, in his admirable study of this poet, observes pertinently: "This intellectual narcissism is not alien to the poet, even though he does not explain the whole of his work: 'why not conceive as a work of art the production of a work of art?'"[39]

Now, as I think I have already hinted, I believe that the *art poétique* of which we find the germ in Poe, and which bore fruit in the work of Valéry, has gone as far as it can go. I do not believe that this esthetic can be of any help to later poets. What will take its place I do not know. An esthetic which merely contradicted it would not do. To insist on the all-importance of subject-matter, to insist that the poet should be spontaneous and irreflective, that he should depend upon inspiration and neglect technique, would be a lapse from what is in any case a highly civilised attitude to a barbarous one.

We should have to have an esthetic which somehow comprehended and transcended that of Poe and Valéry. This question does not greatly exercise my mind, since I think that the poet's theories should arise out of his practice rather than his practice out of his theories. But I recognise first that within this tradition from Poe to Valéry are some of those modern poems which I most admire and enjoy; second, I think that the tradition itself represents the most interesting development of poetic consciousness anywhere in that same hundred years; and finally I value this exploration of certain poetic possibilities for its own sake, as we believe that all possibilities should be explored. And I find that by trying to look at Poe through the eyes of Baudelaire, Mallarmé and most of all Valéry, I become more thoroughly convinced of his importance, of the importance of his *work* as a whole. And, as for the future: it is a tenable hypothesis that this advance of self-consciousness, the extreme awareness of and concern for language which we find in Valéry, is something which must ultimately break down, owing to an increasing strain against which the human mind and nerves will rebel; just as, it may be maintained, the indefinite elaboration of scientific discovery and invention, and of political and social machinery, may reach a point at which there will be an irresistible revulsion of humanity and a readiness to accept the most primitive hardships rather than carry any longer the burden of modern civilisation. Upon that I hold no fixed opinion: I leave it to your consideration.

NOTES

1. Printed for distribution gratis at the end of Dec 1948; on colophon: "This first edition . . . privately printed for the friends of the author and his publishers as a New Year's Greeting." Originally delivered as a lecture at the Library of Congress on 19 Nov 1948. An earlier version, "Edgar Poe et la France," was written in Oct 1947 but delivered in French in Marseille and in English in Aix-en-Provence in Apr 1948 (see 7.130). TSE explained to E. J. H. Greene on 25 Feb 1948: "I am expecting to give my Poe lecture in Marseilles in April. The French text will appear, I think, in Fluchère's selected translations of my essays. But I shall probably want to extend it a bit before printing it in England." When editor William Phillips wrote on 17 Dec to request the essay for the *Partisan Review*, TSE turned him down on the grounds that "the Library of Congress is anxious to publish the talk amongst their own publications. They raise no objection to its being previously printed . . . by Harcourt . . . but I do not think they would agree to general periodical publication." Though TSE gave the Library a copy of the Harcourt text to set up from, before later giving a copy and permission to the *Hudson Review*, the periodical printed the text first in the autumn of 1949; the Library of Congress text was then "Reprinted from *The Hudson Review*" and appeared as a separate second edition in Dec 1949.

The essay was not published separately in England, but it is included in the posthumous *To Criticize the Critic* (1965).

2. This letter was in fact written to Karl Boès in 1889, see n.33 (7.307). Valéry addresses Mallarmé as "cher Maître" in his early letters of the 1890s and recounts his devotion to Mallarmé in his essays on him in *Variété II*, especially in "Dernière visite à Mallarmé" [Last Visit to Mallarmé].

3. TSE emphasized the pivotal place of Valéry in "Leçon de Valéry" (1946): "it is he who will remain for posterity the representative poet, the symbol of the poet, of the first half of the twentieth century – not Yeats, not Rilke, not anyone else" (6.754-55).

4. "He is a European who knew Europe only in imagination," TSE observed in "'A Dream within a Dream': T. S. Eliot on Edgar Allan Poe" (1943) (6.358).

5. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, Poe became an orphan at an early age when his mother died soon after his father left the family. He was looked after by a couple from Richmond, Virginia, John and Frances Allan, and later lived in many cities lying between Boston and Richmond, such as New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

6. "The Gold-Bug" is a short detective story that appeared in 1843.

7. TSE stated in "Homage to Wilkie Collins" (1927) that "the great book which contains the whole of English detective fiction in embryo is *The Moonstone*" (3.14). When discussing how to separate the permanent from the transitory in detective fiction, he wrote in "Sherlock Holmes and his Times" (1929): "We have two standard works by which to judge: *The Moonstone* of Wilkie Collins and *The Murder of Marie Rôget* of Poe" (3.602).

8. C. Auguste Dupin, generally regarded as one of the first fictional detectives, first appears in Poe's short story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841). In "Sherlock Holmes and his Times" TSE had asserted that "I cannot think of anything to which to compare Sherlock Holmes. He does not seem to be descended from either Sergeant Cuff or Monsieur Dupin" (3.602), though he admitted in "Edgar Poe et la France" that Conan Doyle created Sherlock Holmes partly out of Poe's Monsieur Dupin (7.132, 147).

9. In Conan Doyle's story "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box" (1892), Watson relates how Sherlock acquired his Stradivarius violin: "We had a pleasant little meal together, during which Holmes would talk about nothing but violins, narrating with great exultation how he had purchased his own Stradivarius, which was worth at least five hundred guineas, at a Jew broker's in Tottenham Court Road for fifty-five shillings." *His Last Bow: A Reminiscence of Sherlock Holmes* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1917), 80. At the end of chapter 8 of the novel *The Sign of Four* (1890), Watson recounts how Sherlock "took up his violin from the corner, and as I stretched myself out he began to play some low, dreamy, melodious air – his own, no doubt, for he had a remarkable gift for improvization. I have a vague remembrance of his gaunt limbs, his earnest face and the rise and fall of his bow. Then I seemed to be floated peacefully away upon a soft sea of sound, until I found myself in dreamland." *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Long Stories* (London: John Murray, 1929), 215.

In his "Outline of a Lecture on Edgar Allan Poe" (1945), TSE observed: "Poe father of the infallible or amateur detective. Mr. Dupin the original of Sherlock Holmes, who however got his violin from Roderick Usher" (6.690). In Poe's short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), the narrator describes how numerous "books and musical instruments lay scattered

about" in Roderick Usher's studio and later listens to the "fervid *facility* of his *impromptus*" on the guitar. *The Fall of the House of Usher, and Other Tales and Prose Writings of Edgar Poe*, ed. Ernest Rhys (London: Walter Scott, 1889), 4, 10.

10. *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838) is Poe's only complete novel; "A Descent into the Maelström" (1841) and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845) are science fiction short stories.

11. *She: A History of Adventure* (1886-87), a best-selling novel by Rider Haggard; *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and *The Time Machine* (1895) are science fiction novels by H. G. Wells.

12. TSE quotes "Ulalume" (1847), lines 4-5, from his personal copy of *The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, with a Selection of Essays* (London: J. M. Dent, 1927), 86. Poe wrote "Ulalume" as an elocution poem for auditory effect. In "A Dream within a Dream," TSE argued that it "shows his power of *incantation*" (6.360).

13. "And I cried – 'It was surely October / On *this* very night of last year / That I journeyed – I journeyed down here – / That I brought a dread burden down here" (ll. 85-88)

14. TSE quotes from the lyric beginning "Come down, O maid" in *The Princess* (1847), XVII, l. 30. He earlier contrasted these lines by Poe and Tennyson in "Poetical and Prosaic Use of Words" (1943) (6.372).

15. Line 38 of Poe's "The Raven" (1845); his essay "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846) uses "The Raven" to illustrate the principles he lays out.

16. "Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly," l. 49. TSE wrote to I. A. Richards on 28 Dec 1949: "Allen Tate thinks that the Raven coming from the saintly days of yore is O.K.; he tells me that I ought to have thought of Elijah. He also says that you can be stately and ungainly at the same time, and there I believe he may be right."

17. "'Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,' I said, 'art sure no craven,'" l. 45. François de Malherbe's prose criticism insisted on rational discipline in the use of language and verse form.

18. "On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er," l. 76

19. In "The Poetic Principle" (1850), Poe stressed "that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase, 'a long poem' is simply a flat contradiction in terms" (*The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, with a Selection of Essays*, 91). He went on to explain that Milton's *Paradise Lost* can only be regarded as poetical when viewed "merely as a series of minor poems" and that there is "very good reason, for believing it [the *Iliad*] intended as a series of lyrics" (92).

20. Poe argues that the excitement of a poem cannot be sustained at great length: "After the lapse of half an hour, at the very utmost, it flags – fails – a revulsion ensues – and then the poem is, in effect, and in fact, no longer such" (91).

21. In his copy of the *Purgatorio*, TSE marked Virgil's discussions on the nature of love in cantos XVII.91-139 and XVIII.19-75 (Houghton). In "Dante" (1920), he referred specifically to cantos XVI and XVIII, which contain passages that he considered "pure exposition of philosophy, the philosophy of Aristotle strained through the schools" (2.232).

22. In Poe's four-part poem "The Bells," printed posthumously in 1849, the mood in each section becomes gloomier and gloomier, from the "world of merriment" that the bells' melody foretells in part 1 to the "sobbing of the bells" in part 4.

23. "The Haunted Palace" (1839) was later included in "The Fall of the House of Usher" as a poem composed by Roderick Usher. Referring to Villon's *Le Petit Testament* (1456) and *Le Grand*

Testament (1461), both long poems that lament his fallen state and personal misfortune, TSE wrote in "Modern Tendencies in Poetry" (1920): "What constitutes the terrible authenticity of Villon's testaments is that he *saw* his feelings, watched them, as coldly as an astronomer watches a comet; and without this cold and scientific observation he could never have given his feelings their permanent intensity" (2.214-15). The epigraph to TSE's "A Cooking Egg," "*En l'an trentiesme de mon aage / Que toutes mes hontes j'ay beues*" [In the thirtieth year of my life, / When I drank up all my shame], is taken from the opening lines of Villon's *Le Grand Testament* (*CPP* 44 / *Poems1* 38).

24. In "Baudelaire" (1930), TSE drew attention to the fact that the two tercets concluding Baudelaire's poem "Le Guignon" (ll. 9-14) are borrowed from Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (ll. 53-56) (4.159-60). Baudelaire refers to Emerson's *Representative Men* (1850) and *The Conduct of Life* (1860) in *Mon cœur mis à nu* (1864) and *Fusées* (1867), respectively. Both of these works were translated into English by Christopher Isherwood in *Intimate Journals* (1930), to which TSE's "Baudelaire" was originally the introduction.

25. From 1863 to 1893, Mallarmé was an English teacher in Tournon-sur-Rhône, Besançon, and Avignon. *Les Mots anglais*, a kind of philological treatise on the English language that examines English words by grouping them according to their initial consonants or consonant cluster, was published in 1877.

26. Valéry used to spend his summer holidays in Genoa as a child. His Italian mother, Fanny Grassi, spoke Italian to him and sang lullabies in her native Genoese dialect.

27. Between 1847 and 1865, Baudelaire translated Poe's works, which were published as *Histoires extraordinaires* [*Extraordinary Stories*] (1856), *Nouvelles histoires extraordinaires* [*New Extraordinary Stories*] (1857), *Aventures d'Arthur Gordon Pym* [*The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*] (1858), *Eureka* (1863), and *Histoires grotesques et sérieuses* [*Grotesque and Serious Stories*] (1865).

28. Mallarmé became familiar with Poe through Baudelaire, who had left Poe's poetry untranslated. In 1862, Mallarmé traveled to London and started translating Poe's verse. *Le Corbeau*, his translation of "The Raven," was published in 1875 with illustrations by Édouard Manet.

29. "Edgar Poe, sa vie et ses œuvres" [Edgar Poe: His Life and Works] (1856) is the prefatory essay to Baudelaire's translation *Histoires extraordinaires* introducing Poe to French readers.

30. Baudelaire refers to Poe as an "excentrique maudit" [cursed eccentric] in "Edgar Poe, sa vie et ses œuvres." *Histoires extraordinaires* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1869), 12.

31. Referring to Poe's "The Poetic Principle," Baudelaire wrote in "Edgar Poe, sa vie et ses œuvres": "Il croyait, en vrai poëte qu'il était, que le but de la poésie est de même nature que son principe, et qu'elle ne doit pas avoir en vue autre chose qu'elle-même" (14). In "The Poetic Principle" Poe wrote that "under the sun there neither exists nor *can* exist any work more thoroughly dignified – more supremely noble than this very poem – this poem *per se* – this poem which is a poem and nothing more – this poem written solely for the poem's sake" (96).

32. TSE may be referring to Baudelaire's statement in "Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe" (1857): "elle [la poésie] n'a pas la Vérité pour objet, elle n'a qu'elle-même." *Nouvelles histoires extraordinaires* (Paris: A. Quantin, 1884), xv. *Trans*: Poetry does not have Truth as its object, it has only itself. This doctrine was articulated "in more recent times" by TSE's friend the poet Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress from 1939 to 1944, whose "Ars Poetica" (1926) ends with the dictum: "A poem should not mean / But be."

33. "Je chéris . . . les théories si profondes et si perfidement savantes d'Edgar Poe, je crois à la toute-puissance du rythme et surtout de l'épithète suggestive." But this letter, accompanying the sonnet "Élévation de la lune" which was signed and dated "23 juillet '89" and appeared on 1 Oct 1889, was addressed not to Mallarmé but to Karl Boès, the editor of the journal *Le Courrier libre*. In "Edgar Poe et la France," TSE cited the original (7.140, 155). Just before this sentence, he quoted from Henri Mondor's *Vie de Mallarmé*, where this letter is cited (douzième édition, [Paris]: Gallimard, 1943, 579) and where TSE likely encountered it.

34. In "John Dryden" (1921), TSE quoted from "Alexander's Feast; or, The Power of Musique: An Ode in Honour of St. Cecilia's Day" (1697) and praised the way in which the songs of Timotheus, the court flute player, compel Alexander through a series of emotions (see 2.361, n.25).

35. Henri Bremond's books *Prière et poésie* [*Prayer and Poetry*] (1926), reviewed in the *Criterion* of July 1929 by Mario Praz, and *La Poésie pure* [*Pure Poetry*] (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1926) sparked a debate about the purity of formal expression in poetry. Bremond explains in the latter: "Il y a toujours du pur et de l'impur dans un poème; mais la poésie elle-même, ou elle est toute pure ou elle n'est pas. Dès qu'elle paraît, elle *poétise*, si l'on peut dire, elle divinise les éléments impurs qu'il faut bien qu'elle s'annexe: idées, images, sentiments, toutes choses prosaïques, selon moi, par définition" (50-51). *Trans*: There are always pure and impure elements in a poem; but poetry itself is either completely pure, or it is not poetry. As soon as it appears, it *poeticizes*, if one might say so, it exalts the impure elements which it has to appropriate: ideas, images, feelings, all of which, in my opinion, are by definition prosaic.

36. Valéry's poem *Le Serpent*, for example, was first published under the title "Ébauche d'un serpent" [Sketch of a Serpent] in *La Nouvelle Revue française* of July 1921 and then revised by Valéry several times until the last draft, dated 1926. TSE wrote the introduction to Mark Wardle's translation of the poem in 1924 (2.559) and requested that an earlier version of the conclusion be appended (*L2* 229). TSE himself defined this essay in the copy of *From Poe to Valéry* inscribed to Lynette Roberts as "this rough draft of / an ébauche d'un Valéry / in lieu of a / New Year's card. / T. S. Eliot / 3.i.49" (sold by Bloomsbury Auctions, 19 June 2008).

37. "Quant à moi, qui suis, je l'avoue, beaucoup plus attentif à la formation ou à la fabrication des œuvres qu'aux œuvres mêmes." "À mon avis, la plus authentique philosophie n'est pas dans les objets de notre réflexion, tant que dans l'acte même de la pensée et dans sa manœuvre." "Poésie et pensée abstraite" (1939), *Variété V* (Paris: Gallimard, 1944), 148, 157.

38. In the long prose poem *Eureka* (1848), Poe attempts to explain the universe without having undertaken any scientific research to support his conclusions. Though most critics responded unfavorably to the poem, Baudelaire described *Eureka* as "un poëme philosophique" in "Edgar Poe, sa vie et ses œuvres" (32), and translated it into French in 1863. In his essay "Au sujet d'*Eurêka*" (1921), from which TSE quotes in "Edgar Poe et la France" (7.137, 152), Valéry defined it as "un poème abstrait qui est un des rares exemplaires modernes d'une explication totale de la nature matérielle et spirituelle, une *cosmogonie*" (*Variété*, sixième édition, Paris: Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue française, 1924), 128. *Trans*: an abstract poem which is one of those rare modern examples of a total explanation of material and spiritual nature, a *cosmogony*.

In his letter to I. A. Richards of 28 Dec 1949, TSE wrote that, when he turns his mind to the Poe lecture again, he "shall be much surprised if I find 'Eureka' anything but nonsense. My only tip at the moment: try reading 'Eureka' as well as some of the Tales in Baudelaire's translation

– it gives one at least a dim glimpse of why some people have been able to take Poe's philosophy seriously. Comparison of Poe to Coleridge, very much to the disadvantage of the former."

39. Louis Bolle writes in *Paul Valéry* (Fribourg: Egloff, 1944): "Ce narcissisme intellectuel n'est pas étranger au poète quoiqu'il n'explique pas toute son œuvre: '*Pourquoi ne pas concevoir comme une œuvre d'art l'exécution d'une œuvre d'art?*" (61).

Introduction to *En engelsk bog: Tilegnet Kai Friis Møller*, eds. Kjeld Abell, H. C. Branner and Christian Elling

Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1948. Pp. [10] + 182; Introduction, [7].[1]

It is a pleasure to me to salute, on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, a Danish man of letters who is my senior in age by some five or six weeks, and whom therefore I may regard as my contemporary.[2] We have both lived in a time in which communication between European writers has twice been interrupted for a long interval, in which that reciprocal influence of one literature of Western Europe upon another, which is so essential to the health of our common civilisation, has been constantly obstructed. I am therefore all the more grateful – apart from my obligation to one who has done me the honour of presenting some of my own work in translation – to a Danish writer who has done so much for English Literature in Denmark.[3]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Published on 15 Dec 1948. TSE included this tribute in a letter of 29 Aug to Poul Strube, who collaborated on this collection of Danish essays on English literature, saying: "I have your letter of the 13th July. I am glad to hear that Mr. Kai Friis Møller is to be thus honoured on his 60th birthday – or rather, retrospectively to his birthday, as that is already passed. My ignorance of the Danish language, alas, makes it impossible for me to pay a fitting tribute to the poet, but if you wish to include a few words by myself – and besides my appreciation of his reputation, I have my personal gratitude to anyone so distinguished who has presented my own work in translation, I can offer the following:"

2. The Danish poet, critic, and translator Kai Friis Møller (1888-1960) was born exactly six weeks before TSE on 15 Aug 1888.

3. With Tom Kristensen, Møller translated into Danish some of TSE's early poems, including *The Waste Land* and *Ash-Wednesday*, published in *Ødemarken og andre digte* [*"The Waste Land" and Other Poems*] (1948). Møller's other major contribution to English literature in Denmark was through his activity as translator of nineteenth- and twentieth-century English poets from William Blake to Rudyard Kipling.

Account in German of "Ariel Poems"

Broadcast as part of "Christmas Hook-Up" by the BBC German Service on 25 Dec 1948. "Journey of the Magi" was read in German by the German actor Mathias Wieman, with introduction and commentary by TSE. He included the English text of this message in a letter to C. W. Dilke, Assistant Head of the BBC German Service, on 18 Dec offering to record the text.

GERMAN MESSAGE

T. S. ELIOT

Vor etwa zwanzig Jahren brachte das Verlagshaus, dem ich als ein Direktor angehöre, jedes Jahr eine Reihe von Weihnachtskarten heraus. Jede davon enthielt unveröffentlichte Verse eines lebenden Dichters, illustriert von einem bekannten Künstler unserer Zeit. Die Reihe hieß „Die Ariel Gedichte" – ich weiß nicht mehr warum.

Die vier Gedichte, die als „Ariel-Gedichte" in meinen gesammelten Werken erscheinen, waren mein Beitrag für jene Reihe.)[1]

„Die Reise der Magi" war mein erster Beitrag zu dieser Reihe. Genau wie mein „Gesang für Simeon", der ein Jahr später kam, stellt das Gedicht die Frage: Wie weit ward jenen die Wahrheit offenbart, die so bald nach der Geburt Unseres Herrn den Drang in sich fühlten, für Ihn Zeugnis abzulegen?[2] ICH FREUE MICH, DASS DIESES GEDICHT IN DEUTSCHER ÜBERSETZUNG EINEN PLATZ IN DIESER WEIHNACHTSSENDUNG GEFUNDEN HAT.[3]

T. S. E.

23.XII.48

ORIGINAL ENGLISH TEXT

Some twenty years ago, the publishing house of which I am a director produced, every year for four or five years, a series of Christmas cards, each of which was an unpublished poem by a living poet illustrated by some well-known living artist. This series was called – I have forgotten why – "The Ariel Poems." The four poems which appear in my collected works as "Ariel Poems" represent my contribution to the series during four years.[1] "Journey

of the Magi" was the first of these. Like my "Song for Simeon" which followed it a year later, it asks the question: how fully was the Trust revealed to those who were inspired to recognise Our Lord so soon after the Nativity?[2]

NOTES

1. This sentence is deleted in blue ink in the German text.

2. In addition to "Journey of the Magi" (1927) and "A Song for Simeon" (1928), TSE's *Ariel Poems* include "Animula" (1929), "Marina" (1930), and "Triumphal March" (1931), the latter of which appears separately as part I of "Coriolan" (*CPP* 127-28 / *Poems1* 131-32).

3. This final sentence, which is not present in TSE's original message, was added in blue ink. *Trans*: I am pleased that this poem in German translation has found a place in this Christmas broadcast.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The one-page typescript of the German text, emended in blue ink (not by TSE), initialed and dated by TSE in pencil, is in the Hayward Bequest (P34a), King's College.

Tribute to Ananda K. Coomaraswamy[1]

I am certainly an admirer of Dr. Coomaraswamy's work and I have found myself again and again in very close sympathy with his thought. I agree that his life-work should be honoured and that anything possible should be done which would make his work and his philosophy more widely known.[2]

T. S. ELIOT

(London)

NOTES

1. As printed in *Homage to Ananda Coomaraswamy: A Garland of Tributes*, ed. S. Durai Raja Singam. [Kuala Lumpur: Malayan Printers, 1948]. Pp. xii + 192; 132.

2. TSE arranged to meet the Ceylonese (Sri Lankan) philosopher Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) through their mutual friend Martin Shaw in the last days of 1933 (*L6* 777), and he had Coomaraswamy review Theodor Haecker's book on aesthetics *Schönheit. Ein Versuch* (1936) in the *Criterion* of July 1937 (739-41).

This tribute is taken from a letter of 5 Mar 1946 to K. Bharatha Iyer, who wrote the foreword to *Homage to Ananda Coomaraswamy*; TSE's letter continues: "I should therefore in principle be very happy to be represented in a volume to pay tribute to him, but I am obliged to decline your invitation purely and simply on the ground that I shall not have time to do anything appropriate for your volume. In addition, to all the other things I have to do, I have several undertakings of a similar kind which I am under obligation to fulfil first, that is to say articles paying tribute to authors who are either recently deceased or who for some other reason need this acknowledgment. Dr. Coomaraswamy is fortunately still living but it would be quite impossible for me to undertake to contribute by the date you indicate, next May, or for some time afterward." Bharatha Iyer had evidently invited TSE to contribute to his festschrift *Art and Thought: Issued in Honour of Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday* (1947).

Speech at dinner of the Alliance française

TSE delivered this speech on 19 Jan 1949 at the Maison française d'Oxford, 72 Woodstock Road, co-founded in 1946 by TSE's friend and translator Henri Fluchère, the first director, as a center and library for the promotion of cultural exchange. On the invitation of René Varin, the cultural adviser at the French Embassy in London, TSE became a member of the London Committee of the Fédération britannique des comités de l'Alliance française in Feb 1946 and by May was made a member of the administrative council; he was appointed chair of a cultural subcommittee in May 1948 and elected vice president of the Fédération in June. On this occasion, he was being honored for his Nobel Prize, with the French ambassador, His Excellency René Massigli, presiding. At the opening of the Maison française's new Woodstock address on 4 June 1948, Massigli had conferred on TSE the distinction of Knight of the Legion of Honor.

Native language. Several reasons: Difficult enough to speak in public on any occasion; the after dinner speech the most difficult form of oratory; and a speech in giving thanks for a toast in one's own honour the most difficult of all. It cannot be wholly prepared, because you cannot be sure what the proposer is going to say, and therefore some improvisation is called for. Such an honour has never been paid me before: so in view of my appalling task, I refrain from tormenting your ears, and your sense of style, and take refuge in the language of my infancy.

I must not overemphasise the agonies of apprehension which I have undergone, in anticipation of this occasion.[1] If I survive the test, then my memory of suffering will be submerged by the memories of the words that I have heard from Your Excellency and by my appreciation of the honour of having been cast for this role, at a dinner of this society, and under such distinguished auspices. Such a compliment has much greater value, when it is associated with a society in which one is to some degree active, and with a cause which one has always had at heart. I can only say that I am deeply grateful.

I should have preferred to do no more than elaborate my expression of thanks; but I think that the guest of such an occasion is expected to say something more than that; and, steering his way carefully between the platitudinous and the shocking, make some general observations appropriate to the purposes which unite us and the common cause we support.

I have to be very careful myself in using the terms "culture" and "cultural," because I have done my best to discourage anyone from pronouncing these words at all without first taking a deep breath and reflecting for some minutes upon what they are likely to mean in the sentence forming in the mind.[2] Nevertheless, we cannot do without them, as a convenience, in denoting the nature of our activities. The importance of these activities has, I think, to be constantly re-asserted, in relation to the position of public affairs in this country, in Europe, and in the world at large at every time. When people feel no anxiety about the state of the world – this is now a merely hypothetical state of mind – they are inclined to regard such activities as ours as pleasantly trivial; when minds are disturbed and inquiet, they are apt to regard them as useless. To some, our purposes may seem trivial, to others, too ambitious; some may think them unnecessary, others may think them vain.

This is the usual judgment of uninformed minds about any organisation which is concerned, from day to day, with the affairs of small groups, societies and study circles scattered all over the country, the achievements of which cannot be summed up, at any moment, in any single impressive report. It is also the usual judgement, at a time when men's minds are more than ever concerned with the material basis of life, and when men live in uncertainty of the future, from month to month and from season to season. We have therefore to reassure ourselves, from time to time, by trying to review our scattered activities and see them as a whole in relation to the long term purpose. We must remind ourselves, first, that the role of the Fédération Britannique is primarily to assist, by providing a central bureau to which they can appeal, the large number of local societies and groups which exist, throughout this country, for the study of French language and French culture. Some are very small or remote; some are large and flourishing, in important centres; some have already a history, others are only in process of formation. These groups, each of which represents local interest and enthusiasm, would exist whether the Fédération Britannique existed or not. They want lecturers – and they want different types of lecture. They want to obtain French periodicals; and they need some organisation like this through which they can be in touch with France. Each of these societies has its own interests and needs; and here I must compliment M. Chailley, for his appreciation of the nature of the task he has undertaken, and for the zeal and intelligence with which he has set about it.[3] If we are to serve these local groups as they should be served, the secretary must establish a

close personal contact with all of them; this means that he must visit each centre from time to time, if he is to be able to know the character of each, to assist and to counsel those who direct them; and to this task, which will no doubt become increasingly exacting, M. Chailley has addressed himself with vigour.

I am only saying what many of you know well already; but I feel that those who live in London and see nothing of the work with and for the local groups, and who perhaps do not know how numerous – and increasing – and how wide-spread these groups are, may need to be reminded of this. And perhaps the members of no one group can know how varied and complex the total situation is. That is my excuse for mentioning the matter: only since I have been associated with the meetings of the Council and of the sub-committee to which I belong, have I gained some appreciation of the work of the Fédération Britannique as a whole.[4]

The intellectual bonds between Britain and France date from very early times: I say "Britain" at this point, remembering that there was a bond between France and Scotland, commonly known as the Auld Alliance, which was based upon a common disapproval of English policy.[5] The Channel is not a frontier – it is something very much better than a frontier. At times, as in the Napoleonic period, it has proved a very present help in time of trouble; on the other hand it has proved, in Napoleonic and in all times, a very sure and sensitive conductor of ideas. Thought has crossed and recrossed the Channel uninterruptedly for centuries. I believe that so long as this line of communication is unbroken, the core of Europe is preserved. It was not really broken even eight years ago, but rather re-affirmed: for I think that the brief period during which it was then interrupted, only made people in this country more aware – and made some aware who had not been aware before – that to be cut off from France was to live as if in an iron lung, by artificial respiration. At the present time, the consciousness that Britain is a part of Europe is more and more widespread: and we know that the essential condition of Britain being a part of Europe, is that Britain and France should understand each other – in that sense, and to that degree, to which it is apposite to speak of nations understanding each other. I am not interested in the agreements, or the disagreements, between the governments of the two countries next week or next month. Governments must perpetually be agreeing and disagreeing, making friends and falling out – that is part of their business – just as it is a part of the business of Ambassadors, and a very important function it is, to promote the accords and mollify the

asperities of international politics. But the temporary agreements on particular issues mean very little, if there is no permanent sympathy between the peoples; and, if there is this permanent sympathy, the fallings out mean still less. Now, in the late unhappy differences between our two nations – I refer to the period immediately following the French Revolution and the accession to power of Napoleon Bonaparte – there were many people in England so influenced by French ideas that, had they lived to-day, they would have earned the appellation of "quislings."[6] But my point is, that at that time the lines of communication could be kept open by a few people. Under modern conditions, many more people are needed, in both countries, to have a love, admiration and understanding of the other. If there are enough, whoever they are, or in whatever part of either country, then the unity of the two nations can be maintained, whatever the differences that may arise between whatever statesmen may be guiding the destinies of either. I put "guiding the destinies" *entre guillemets*, because I believe that in the long run this guidance rests with the sort of people who, in this country, support the Fédération Britannique de l'alliance Française. Messieurs et Mesdames, je vous remercie de votre attention tolérante.[7]

NOTES

1. TSE described to Enid Faber on 22 Jan "the nightmare dinner of the Alliance Française given in my honour that paralysed me for days and days beforehand: and it was far worse than I expected, because I had to take the chair first for an hour and a half of the meeting of the Executive Committee. . . . After that a broadcast interview in French, and after that the banquet but I made my speech in English." TSE's answers in French to the interviewer of Radiodiffusion française are in King's (H2j).

2. TSE wrote at the end of *NTDC*, published the previous year: "My enquiry, therefore, has been directed on the meaning of the word *culture*: so that everyone should at least pause to examine what this word means to him, and what it means to him in each particular context before using it" (7.267).

3. Claude Chailley was the Secrétaire général of the Fédération britannique des comités de l'Alliance française.

4. TSE was chair of the cultural subcommittee of the Conseil d'administration of the Fédération britannique, which, as he wrote to Claude Chailley on 3 May 1948, "will have no concern with financial matters, but will be entirely occupied with cultural problems."

5. The Auld Alliance was a military and political alliance between Scotland and France, which lasted from 1295 to 1560. It was based on their common desire to curb English expansion.

6. quisling (OED): "A person cooperating with an occupying enemy force; a collaborator; a traitor."

7. *Trans*: Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your patient attention.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The three-page typescript, with TSE's holograph emendations, is in the Hayward Bequest (H21), King's College. John Hayward's manuscript note at the top of the first page reads: "Speech at Dinner in his honour by Fédération Britannique de l'Alliance française at the Maison de France, 19 Jan. 1949. S.[on] E.[xcellence] René Massigli, Ambassadeur de France, presiding."

Strindbergs inflytande på T. S. Eliot betydande

Svenska Dagbladet (20 Jan 1949) 7

För någon tid sedan fick jag ert brev med begäran om ett uttatalande med anledning av hundraårsminnet av August Strindberg. Jag var då och ända till min återkomst till London i mitten av december mycket upptagen och stannade aldrig länge på en och samma plats, och därefter har, som ni säkert förstår, när tre månaders angelägenheter, som kommit på efterkälken, förutom diverse löpande frågor tagit hela min uppmärksamhet i anspråk.[1] För att kunna åstadkomma någonting av värde för eder räkning hade jag måst ägna Strindbergs verk – de som finns översatta till engelska – förnyat studium och begrundan för att igen, efter flera mellanliggande år, få ett grepp om dem. För ett sådant förberedande arbete har jag tyvärr inte haft någon tid till övers.

Jag skulle emellertid inte vilja låta ett sådant evenemang få passera utan åtminstone någon kommentar. För den saken måste jag i så fall gå vid pass fyrtio år tillbaka i tiden. Med undantag av *Gustav Vasa*, som jag för sex år sedan såg uppföras på svenska av Riksteatern, en föreställning, som jag har i livligt minne, har jag aldrig sett någon pjäs av Strindberg spelas.[2] De framföranden av hans dramatik som engelsk och amerikansk scen haft att bjuda ha blott varit alltför sällsynta, och just vid den tid då jag läste hans skådespel, hade jag alls ingen möjlighet att få se något av dem på scenen. Jag lärde emellertid känna hans verk under den period av mitt liv, då jag, liksom varje författare, var i hög grad mottaglig för intryck. Jag hade då ännu inte fattat något medvetet beslut att försöka skriva för scenen utan sökte endast finna mitt eget uttryckssätt inom lyriken. Men jag kände mig starkt fängslad av den dramatiska skaldekonsten, särskilt då givetvis av den som härrör från våra egna dramatiker från drottning Elisabets och Jakob I:s tid. Samtidigt läste jag en hel del modern dramatik – det vill säga den del därav, som föreföll vara av intellektuellt eller litterärt intresse. Bernard Shaws pjäser (de som skrevs för fyrtiofyra år sedan!) gjorde inte något starkare intryck på mig, Maeterlincks produktion, som då var mycket på modet, skänkte mig en avgjord ehuru mycket flyktig stimulans. Den irländska teatern – särskilt då J. M. Synges och Lady Gregorys pjäser – intresserade mig mera i sin egenskap av samtidsskildringar, återgivna på en poetisk prosa, ehuru W. B. Yeats' tidigare dramatiska produktion föreföll mig antikverad i sin stil och

verklighetsfrämmande till innehållet (för hans senaste dramatik däremot hyser jag en varm beundran).[3]

När jag ser tillbaka, tycker jag mig finna att vad jag har dessa utländska dramatiker att tacka för (jag bör bland dem även medräkna Alfred Jarry)[4] är framför allt den omedvetet stimulerande känsla jag erfor av det blotta faktum, att man ännu inte givit upp försöket att skapa lyriskt drama av det ena eller andra slaget; samtidigt har jag klart för mig, att det inflytande som Ibsen och Strindberg utövade på mig (jag hade till mitt förfogande Ibsens samtliga men endast en del av Strindbergs verk) var av ett mera djupgående slag. Dessa båda dramatiker äro sinsemellan starka kontraster. Med utgångspunkt från det som speciellt intresserar mig skulle jag vilja säga att vad de ha gemensamt är en poetisk uppfattning av det ämne de behandla. För en läsare som endast hade tillfälle att lära känna dem i översättning var detta mera påfallande i fråga om deras prosa än beträffande deras versifierade skådespel, åt vilka, såvitt jag kan minnas, de föreliggande översättningarna knappast gjorde full rättvisa. Sådana intryck, mottagna vid en sådan tidpunkt av ens liv, bli av desto mera bestående värde genom att vara fria från varje medveten tanke på efterbildning; den litterära verksamhet jag då ägnade mig åt var inte av det slag, att dessa dramatiker medvetet skulle ha kunnat tjäna mig som förebilder. Var och en som läser eller ser mina egna pjäser uppföras kan, lika väl som jag, bedöma vidden och arten av min tacksamhetsskuld till dem.

Eder förbundne
T. S. ELIOT

London den 6 januari 1949.

ORIGINAL ENGLISH TEXT

Dear Sir,

You wrote to me, some time ago, and asked for some expression of recognition on the occasion of the centenary of August Strindberg. I was, from that time until my return to London in the middle of December, very much occupied and never long in one place; and since that time you will, I am sure, understand that nearly three months of business arrears, together with current affairs of all kinds, have engrossed my attention.[1] To have prepared for you anything worthy of the occasion, I should have had to return to the works of Strindberg – those that have been translated into English – peruse and meditate on them afresh, after the lapse of many years. For such preparation, I am sorry to say, I have had no time.

I should not however, wish such an occasion to pass without offering some testimony. For that I must refer back some forty-odd years. With the exception of *Gustav Vasa*, of which I remember vividly a performance in Swedish, at the Rikstheater, six years ago, I have never seen a play of Strindberg performed;[2] performances on the English and American stage are all too rare, and at the time and place at which I read the plays, there was no stage production to be seen. This was, however, an impressionable period of my life, as of that of every writer. I had not, at that time, formed any conscious intention of attempting to write for the stage, and was only trying to find my own idiom in lyric verse. But I was much attracted by dramatic poetry; especially, of course, by that of our Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists. At the same time I read a good deal of modern drama – of that part of it, that is to say, which appeared to have any intellectual or literary interest. The plays of Mr. Bernard Shaw (those that had been written forty-four years ago!) made very little impression upon me; those of Maeterlinck, then very much the fashion, provided a definite, though very transitory, stimulus. The Irish Theatre – the plays especially of J. M. Synge and of Lady Gregory – interested me more, as plays of contemporary life in a poetic prose idiom; though the early plays of W. B. Yeats seemed to me antiquated in style and remote in the subject-matter (for his last plays I have a warm admiration).[3]

I think, in retrospect, that what I owe to these foreign dramatists (and I ought to include Alfred Jarry)[4] was chiefly the unconscious feeling of encouragement in the fact that poetic drama, of one kind or another, was still being attempted; but that a deeper influence was that of Ibsen and that of Strindberg (and all of Ibsen, but only certain plays of Strindberg, were available to me in translation). These two dramatists are extremely different from each other; what they had in common, so far as my own interests were concerned, was I think a poetic apprehension of their material. This was still more apparent, to a reader who could know them only through translation, in their prose than in their verse, of which the translations, as I remember, were not very distinguished. Such influences, at such a period in one's life, are all the deeper from having no element of conscious imitation: and at that time the type of literary exercise in which I engaged was not of a kind for which I could take these dramatists as models for conscious imitation. Those who read or see my own plays can judge as well as I the extent and nature of my debt.

Yours very sincerely,
[T. S. ELIOT]

NOTES

1. The Swedish writer and translator Karl Ragnar Gierow (1904-82), literary editor of the *Svenska Dagbladet*, wrote to TSE on 10 Nov 1948 requesting a contribution to mark the centenary of August Strindberg's birth on 22 Jan 1949. Gierow added that they asked "a few prominent authors of to-day to state what Strindberg has meant to them personally and to their generation of writers." TSE was staying at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton at the time. His response, composed in English and translated into Swedish anonymously, was dated 6 Jan 1949 and published two weeks later under the title "Strindbergs inflytande på T. S. Eliot betydande" [Strindberg's Influence on T. S. Eliot Considerable].

2. TSE was on a five-week tour of Sweden from late Apr to 24 May 1942 under the auspices of the British Council. He wrote to John Hayward on 14 June: "Mrs. Pauline Brunius the Sibyl Thorndike of Sweden who gave me tickets to *Gustav Vasa* historical play by Strindberg which seems to be modelled on Shakespeare's historical plays but also contains several neurotic Swedish characters who are not very Shakespearean" (King's). Strindberg's play *Gustav Vasa*, about the Swedish King Gustav I (1496-1560), was first performed at the Swedish Theatre in Stockholm in 1899. Founded in 1933, Riksteatern is the largest performing arts organization in Sweden.

3. TSE discussed the evolution of Yeats's dramatic form in "Yeats" (1940) (6.84-87).

4. Alfred Jarry (1873-1907), French Symbolist novelist and dramatist, whose play *Ubu Roi* [*Ubu the King*] (1896) is said to have anticipated Dada and Futurism.

Speech for the centenary celebration of August Strindberg

Untitled address to the Anglo-Swedish Society in celebration of the August Strindberg Centenary, held at the Swedish Hall, Harcourt Street, Marylebone, W. 1 on Tuesday, 1 Feb 1949, at 1 p.m. TSE's address was reported and summarized in the *Times* of 2 Feb 1949, 2. The main speaker on this occasion was Elizabeth Sprigge, biographer, translator, and editor of Strindberg; Michael Redgrave read passages from Strindberg's *The Great Highway* (1909). TSE was the chairman of the meeting; his introductory remarks were typed on the verso of two separate copies of the program.

Centenary celebrations occur often enough in this country, and usually have little more than a formal meaning. There are a few enthusiasts, a number of people who feel that something ought to be done, a momentary mention of a name everywhere, and then everything is just as before, and the great name is again forgotten. This anniversary of August Strindberg seems to me to be something rather different.[1] I seem to notice, first, a sense of shame, that the work of August Strindberg which was quickly enough noticed here, has so long been neglected. But more than that: a sense that we are now in a better position to appreciate him, that life has caught up with him. So much the worse, perhaps, for life: but so much the better for Strindberg.[2] That many things which have been written in recent years, were in spirit anticipated by him. The journalist is the man with a sense of his own time; the creative writer anticipates the time for which his work will be timely – so with August Strindberg I think that in the attention now being given to him there is a recognition which will endure. Forty years ago, his work appeared to most of us the ravings of a morbid man of genius: now, they seem less morbid, because they seem to correspond to the world in which we live.[3]

This at least is the difference between the kind of fascination which his plays had for me forty years ago, and my attitude on re-reading them lately, not having returned to them in the mean time. I speak only of his plays, because that is all that I know; and only, of course, in the English translations.[4] But there is one other point I should like to make. August Strindberg has been lauded for his pioneer work in realism, and also for his daring innovation of fantasy on the stage; as if these were two distinct sides to his work and personality. To me, there is as much fantasy in his realism, and as

much realism in his fantasy: in other words, these are only two aspects of the same vision. For he was, as a dramatist, essentially a poet in an age of prose:[5] and the poetic vision is that which sees the matter of fact and sordid as strange and fantastic, and the fantastic and strange as matter of fact. And I think that the experience of the sordid and fantastic 35 years that we have lived through, has prepared us for a juster appreciation of his work.

Of such a catching up of an author in time, and of the kind of appreciation of August Strindberg for which I think we are now ready, there are certain symptoms which are also in part causes. One such symptom, which will also be a cause of understanding, is the biography in which Miss Sprigge seems to have given us finally, and in a most interesting form, all that the facts of August Strindberg's life can do to help our understanding; another symptom is the revival of "The Father" in which Mr. Redgrave is playing.[6] We are fortunate to have as speakers the two people who are most appropriate speakers on this occasion.

NOTES

1. TSE included the Swedish playwright and writer Johan August Strindberg (1849-1912), born on 22 Jan 1849, among the "great modern dramatists," alongside Ibsen and Chekhov in "The Aims of Poetic Drama," a talk he delivered in Germany in Oct 1949 (7.376).

2. TSE has made a pencil insert mark before the next sentence, but no insert is present to revise the beginning of the sentence, which might start: "We know"

3. In his review of Robert Lynd's *Old and New Masters* (1919), TSE had quoted with disapproval the following statement by Lynd: "The mirror that Strindberg held up to nature was a cracked one. It was cracked in a double sense – it was crazy" (2.55).

4. TSE wrote to Mary Hutchinson on 23 Jan: "I have still to preside at a meeting of the Anglo-Swedish Society in honour of Strindberg – who has been a perfect nuisance to me for the last three months" (Ransom); and to Countess Nora Wydenbruck on the same day: "And next week I have to preside at a meeting of the Anglo-Swedish Society in honour of Strindberg, whose plays I have not read for forty years." There are none in TSE's library.

5. In "The Aims of Poetic Drama," TSE stated: "Ibsen, Strindberg and even Tchekov, were really poets who were actually hampered by the limitations of prose" (7.376).

6. Elizabeth Sprigge (1900-74) published her biography, *The Strange Life of August Strindberg* (1949), to coincide with the centenary celebration. Michael Redgrave (1908-85) was appearing in Strindberg's *The Father* (1887) at the Duchess Theatre in London from 24 Jan.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The two copies of the program, on the verso of which TSE typed this speech and made pencil corrections, are in the Hayward Bequest (P39a), King's College.

Leadership and Letters

Milton Bulletin, 12 (Feb 1949) [3]-16[1]

When I was invited by the Headmaster to deliver the address on this memorial foundation, I reflected for a long time on three points. The first was the origin of the Foundation: the men whose memory it was designed to perpetuate. The second was the general area of subject-matter prescribed for the lecturers. The third was what gave me pause: I think that a speaker in my position should start from his own experience, from the matter of his lifetime's chief activity, and endeavor to relate his special knowledge to the terms of reference of the Foundation. As a man of letters, what contribution could I possibly make to the problem of "leadership in a democracy"?[2]

First of all, the meaning of this Foundation. It constitutes a memorial to the men from Milton who have fallen in two World Wars. Some of the men of the first of these two generations were boys at Milton when I was here myself; from the perspective of the years, I can consider myself the contemporary of all the men of 1917-18. This in itself was a powerful inducement to me to accept the invitation to speak. We must now make our commemoration in a very different spirit from that which animated the nineteen-twenties. But we have all the more obligation not to forget. Anniversaries of victory we can no longer celebrate with the same rejoicing – such celebration may now seem to us half a mockery; but the memory of sacrifice is one that we should always preserve and renew. And, in observing this piety towards the dead, we should remember that this would be, not a reflection upon the past, but an admission of our own bankruptcy of spirit. It is for us who are living to justify the sacrifice of the dead by our own conduct in war or in peace.

The terms upon which your memorial speakers on this occasion give this address are, that what they say should have some bearing upon the problem of "leadership in a democracy." Now we have been often enough reminded, in the last few years, that the word "democracy" can mean, to one people, exactly the opposite of what it means to another. The word means to everyone something more than its mere etymology can warrant; and I think we should admit that it need not mean *quite* the same thing in

any two countries; for democracy, we must remember, is not a reality simply because of a constitution, or because of a particular political structure and mechanism, but only if it is sustained by the spirit of a people and by the attitude of man to man in personal relationships. What will seem democratic to the citizens of one country may sometimes seem less democratic to the citizens of another, for the ways in which a democratic spirit can express itself can vary. Nevertheless, there is one great division today which we cannot forget. We are on the same side of this division. I think that I and my present audience can agree – and that is all the consensus I need – on a definition, for the purpose of what I am going to say. I think we can agree that we can call a nation democratic, to the extent to which there is a diffusion of both freedom and responsibility. There is one distinction of kind: between democracy and totalitarianism. There is another division only of degree: the degree to which freedom and responsibility are realized throughout a people. For democracy is an ideal which is realized only to a greater or less degree, and nowhere perfectly. And in every democratic country, there will be many individuals who shirk not only the burden of responsibility but the burden of freedom, and we can only try patiently to educate them – and ourselves – to bear this dual burden. But so far as any nation preserves the ideal of freedom and responsibility, we may call that nation a democracy.

Clearly, leadership must mean something different among people who cherish this ideal, from what it means to those in which a minority become "leaders" and the great majority simply "the led." The word "leader" has become somewhat contaminated, since this lectureship was established, by association with such terms as "gauleiter" and "commissar."[3] I think that one characteristic of a democracy is that leadership is never total but specialized; and that those who are leaders in one activity are followers in others. Another is, that there should always be, in our following of a leader, a voluntary element; that the element of unquestioning obedience should be as small as the situation admits – for always, in peace as well as war, some orders must be carried out whether they are understood and approved or not. Our ideal, at least, for following, is that it should always be voluntary and that it should always be critical – for the capacity of criticism is one which a democracy should always encourage.

In a democracy, then, leadership should be qualified by the sense of freedom and responsibility on the part of those who are led – and that should

be all of us in one respect or another. The responsibility should be free responsibility, not simply such responsibility as is imposed with the threat of a penalty; and the freedom should be responsible freedom. And free responsibility means also that a man has the freedom to shirk his responsibility, the freedom to do ill or to do nothing, as well as to do good.

In a democracy good leadership depends as much upon the led as upon the leaders. We shall choose different leaders in different spheres; we shall not call it democracy when the heads of the State decree that biologists must accept, on political grounds, one theory of evolution rather than another; or when they encourage or suppress, on the same grounds, the work of poets, musicians or architects. But in a democracy we shall have not only independent leaders in different spheres; we shall find, in these different spheres, different types of leadership. And this last remark leads me to the question to which I found myself turning for the first time: the question, what does leadership mean in the arts, and particularly in the art of literature, more particularly still in the art of poetry? This, if any, is the sphere of activity about which I ought to know, and about which I do know a good deal from the point of view of the editor and the publisher as well as from that of the writer.

There is certainly something very different in leadership in the arts, if in these fields we speak of leadership at all, from leadership in public life. A sagacious observer of men and policy, and a close student of history, the late Frederick Scott Oliver, remarked somewhere that the first requirements for a statesman were love of power and love of his country.[4] I am not concerned with the truth or error of this assertion about politics, but only with the fact that it has no application to the world of letters. Certainly, there are activities associated with literature in which people may enjoy the sense of power, and in which we may say that they are entitled to this feeling. There is a place for a kind of deliberate leadership in the advancement of literature. I think of a friend who, in the early days, was as much concerned with the encouragement and improvement of the work of unknown writers in whom he discerned talent, as with his own creative work; who formulated, for a generation of poets, the principles of good writing most needful for their time; who tried to bring these writers together for their reciprocal benefit; who, in the face of many obstacles, saw that their writings were published; saw that they were reviewed somewhere by critics who could appreciate them; organized or supported little magazines in which their work could

appear – and incidentally, liked to give a good dinner to those who he thought could not afford it, and sometimes even supplied the more needy with articles of clothing out of his own meagre store. To him, several other authors, since famous, have owed a very great deal. I am sure that he enjoyed his activity in these kinds; he very likely enjoyed a sense of power in their exercise; but if he had been motivated by the love of power, he would have been of no use to anybody, for the kind actions which are performed *in order that* the benefactor may enjoy a sense of power are oppressive and humiliating to the recipient, resented even when accepted, and futile or harmful in the end.[5]

This was certainly a form of leadership. The good editor, and the good publisher, practice direct leadership of the same kind. I have in mind another friend, whose example as an editor was of guidance to me when I undertook to edit a literary review myself. He was not primarily concerned with increasing the circulation of his periodical, but with his responsibility towards the readers it already had and towards his contributors – his responsibility to make that paper the best of its kind. He was indefatigable in seeking out new talent; he cultivated the acquaintance of his contributors, helped them with criticism and advice, tried to choose for them to review only those books which would interest them, suggested subjects on which they should write. When the result was notably successful, his pleasure in it was as great as that of the writer himself. As he assigned to each reviewer the kind of book in which the latter was specially interested, a reviewer became, in the course of a few years of working for him, much more of an authority in his chosen field; but, when this editor knew that a contributor was to be trusted, he was always ready to let him gratify other or newer interests in the same way.[6] A good literary editor, furthermore, does much in the way of bringing his contributors together socially: and a writer needs contact, not only with an appreciative public, but with other writers whose personalities are sympathetic, though their points of view may be, often to their mutual stimulation and advantage, opposed.

The good publisher, to my mind, has similar responsibilities. It is true that his good intentions must be limited by the necessity of remaining solvent and paying the wages of his staff, whereas the best literary magazines are often run at a loss by publishers, supported by institutions, or subsidized by benefactors. The publisher is faced with the necessity of publishing books that people will like at once, as well as publishing books that they ought to

like, or will like after some years when they have become used to them. But no good publisher is a publisher simply in order to make money: if you want to make money, there are other ways of making it more rapidly, more dependably, and in larger figures. He is a publisher because he appreciates the opportunity of publishing good books, and of giving an opportunity to writers who might otherwise be ignored. And, incidentally, the good publisher does not merely accept or reject books. The hardest part of the work, on the editorial side of publishing, is something of which the readers of the books are quite unaware. A manuscript may be worth printing, but at the same time it may be one that can be made much better; and it is the publisher's business to see that every book is made as good in its kind, before it goes to the printer, as it can be. He must criticize many manuscripts in great detail; he must perform much of the work of the critics before the critics are allowed their opportunity; and his experience should teach him devices by which, without any sacrifice of quality, or of the personal idiom of the writer, a book may be made more attractive to the public or to the reviewers. Sometimes, I may add, the attempt to aid an author in these ways meets with a stubborn resistance: this resistance is sometimes stronger when the author has already had a certain success with previous work; tact is often needed, and irritable authors have to be soothed with entertainment at lunch or dinner. And the publisher must remember, like the lawyer with his clients or the physician with his patients, that there are some authors who are, in their own eyes, each the most important author on that publisher's list. Now, I do not suggest for a moment that good books never pay. If that were the case, we should prefer some other kind of business. Sometimes it is a long time before they do pay: but the publisher's greatest satisfaction, after seeing that a good book is made into a still better book, is to publish the book simply because he likes it himself.

I have been speaking of kinds of leadership associated with literature; and it is vital for the health of literature that such leadership should be exercised. And although this is a very different leadership from that of public life, it is still a more or less conscious leadership, for it is a matter of direct responsibility to aid other people. All three – the individual literary impresario, the editor and the publisher, can take legitimate pleasure in the power they exercise. But, before passing to consider the position of the writer, it is as well to add, that if the desire for power becomes stronger in a man than what we may call his sense of vocation, becomes stronger than the sense of

responsibility, then these activities will go bad. It is only one species of a universal danger. In the world of political revolution, we see men, so long as their party is a minority, neglected, oppressed or persecuted, devote themselves to a cause and hold themselves ready to become martyrs for it; and we see the same men, when they arrive at power, reverse their attitude, identify the cause with themselves and become in turn oppressors. And the point at which the change occurs may be so imperceptible that these men will remain completely unaware of it.

It is, to me, wholly unintelligible that any man should *want* to be a leader. But then, I cannot understand anyone wanting to be a poet. To my way of looking at it, the poet is at most a man who has now and again written a good poem; and he should be concerned, not with being a poet, but with making a good poem of what he is in the process of writing, or just about to write. For me, the term "poet" is merely a convenient short term to mean somebody who has written some good poems. One was perhaps a poet yesterday, one *may* be a poet tomorrow; but one is never a poet today. One can be an editor, or a publisher, or a bank-clerk, all the time, for these are professions: but poetry is not a profession. Neither is leadership. A leader is merely a man who had led, on this or that occasion, and who may perhaps lead again. A general is a general all the time, even in his pyjamas: but he is only a leader at some times.

This brings me to the question of what leadership means in the world of imaginative and philosophic writing. I do not believe that any great piece of writing in these kinds has ever been inspired by the desire for influence. Certainly there are some masterpieces of prose which have had this motive. I think of Jonathan Swift's *Drapier's Letters*, which were designed to influence public opinion in Ireland against the introduction of a debased coinage;[7] I think of any of a number of masterpieces of oratory. These had the intention of immediate influence upon action; some of them were successful; but they are read now for quite different reasons, long after the issues with which they were immediately concerned have ceased to agitate: Swift for the excellence of his style, Edmund Burke, also for political insights and statements of principle of permanent value, the importance of which probably escaped most of his auditors at the time.[8] I mention such kinds of writing, merely to show that I am not unaware that the desire to exert an immediate influence upon action operates in some departments of what we call literature, before proceeding to the kinds of writing which,

having attempted to practise, I know more from the inside. In what way, then, can we think of a great poet (you noticed, I hope, how I defined my use of this word) or a great novelist, or even a great philosopher, as a "leader"?

The point which I shall aim to make is that such writers are leaders only in a paradoxical way. Their leadership is no concern of theirs; they have something else to occupy their minds: what their influence is, depends upon the men and women who are affected by what they write. I cannot believe that any good writer of these kinds of literature has ever been inspired by the desire for influence; and if he was, he would be doomed to disappointment. Certainly a poet either fails to notice any influence that he has had on other poets, though other people may tell him it is there; or else, if he does see it, he doesn't like it, because the influence you do exert is likely to be very different from what you think it ought to have been. We know that Immanuel Kant did not much relish the philosophy of the next generation of German philosophers who took their start from his work: where he had said philosophy ought to stop, they insisted on going on, and in effect claimed that they knew better what his philosophy meant than he did himself.[9] Successors interpret your work to suit themselves, take from it what suits themselves, and ignore what it suits them to ignore. And as for influencing the ordinary reader, it is equally unpredictable what that reader will find in what you write.

I say not only that the desire to influence the reader can form no part of the motive in certain kinds of writing, but that the fact that the author has no intention to influence may be a condition of his having influence. It is true that some authors, and some among the greatest, have chosen themes for their instructive value. Both Dante and Virgil had a social purpose; and Milton justified his choice of subject to himself in the same way.[10] But their prime motive must have been to make something beautiful and something honest.[11] What is certain is that their influence has not been due to any intention to influence people. Most often, the awareness that someone is trying to influence us makes us resist. We have to see a work of art as something which exists, a philosophy as a statement of how one man has understood the universe, in order to be affected by them. And we are often most deeply impressed by the words of the man who seems to be giving us something just to contemplate, without either his or our worrying about the effect of this contemplation upon us. We may all, in the course of our lives, come to experience something similar to the position of author and reader, in

relations with other people. Several times I have been told by someone "at such a moment (perhaps long ago) you were of great help to me" – at a moment when I was not consciously trying to help him. And more often I have found, that my most calculated efforts to help, or to encourage, or to console somebody have been just of no avail at all.

What I am insisting upon the importance of, does not imply any notion of what is called "art for art's sake." It is an insistence upon the importance in any society of activities which are not directly aimed at social consequences. It applies to the reflective and contemplative activities, and to the activity of the pure scientist. The strongest motive in the intellectual leader of one of these types is the passion to discover the truth for its own sake; for truth, of different kinds, is the goal of the poet and the novelist as well as of the man of science. And when we think we have discovered the truth about something, we want to communicate it, to share it with others and make them see what we have seen. In this way a writer wants his work to be printed and to be read; and a dramatist wants his play to be produced on the stage. But the more our minds are concentrated on discovering the truth, the less we concern ourselves about its effects. There is a story that a great scientist of optics, I think Von Helmholtz, was waited upon by a deputation of opticians to thank him, on behalf of their profession and of their patients, for inventing a glass by which it was possible to look at the back of the living eye. In thanking them, he explained that his motive had not been to help the treatment of eye ailments, but simply curiosity to see what the back of the eye looked like.[12] And this kind of activity, of which the social consequences are merely by-products, can only flourish, I think, in a democratic society, in contrast to a totalitarian society in which both art and science are expected to be of immediate utility, if not to the people, at least to their rulers. It depends upon that tolerance which makes possible for some men simply to go their own way; and without that tolerance we can have no growth and development of civilisation.

I may appear so far to have been denying that literature has anything to do with leadership. That is not what I am after. I have only said that it is unconscious, unintentional, and that it may be very different from anything the author could anticipate: I may remind you that an important part of an author's influence is that which he exercises long after his death. I have also suggested that in a democracy leadership is as much a quality of the led as of the leader. So we must consider the readers of a book, the process through which an author's work becomes established.

We remark first the difference between the situation of author and reader in the democracy of today and the situation in earlier stages of democratic development. The movement from a less to a more democratic society has been rapid. The spread of education, the vast increase of literacy, through public libraries and through purchasing power, have very much expanded the reading public. The amount of reading matter has increased with great velocity, and the number of writers as well as readers has increased. There are many more matters on which we think we should be informed, or about which our curiosity impels us to acquire some smattering. In the past, not so very long ago when we consider the span of historic time, there were fewer writers, and the writer wrote for a public which was both smaller and closer together. The public was smaller, not merely because the population was smaller, but because there were fewer educated people relative to the size of the population. What is more, there was not the great variety in education, not only of methods but of subject matter of study, that there is today. The people who read books had been educated in the same subjects; they knew the same things, and were ignorant of the same things. Books were not marketed by expensive sales-promotion and advertising, as they are today; nor did people form their reading-lists by reading literary supplements. The author and his public were in closer contact; and the members of the public were in closer contact; so that the reputation of a new book spread not through printed matter about it, but by the conversation of intelligent people who knew each other personally and therefore could form an opinion of what was worth reading by their estimate of the taste of the man who recommended it.

It is obvious that today the ways in which a new book becomes known must be very different. I am not repining for the past, in recognising the difficulties of the present: but I hold that any social change, for better as well as for worse, gives rise to new problems and new dangers. Even with a large and indefinable reading public, its members in less intimate contact with the authors and with each other, a public which finds out what books to read by reading what is written about them by critics who may be equally unknown to it, we may trace the process by which any new work of literature – and by that I mean a work of great originality – gradually becomes known and accepted.

How such a book gets published is now, as it always has been and very likely always will be, a question of chance or providence. It must meet the eye of some person of discrimination with literary influence, or of some

appreciative publisher. Beyond this point, few readers are aware, once an author's reputation has been made, how slow, painful and sometimes almost desperate the process has been; for how many years the author was approved by only a very few people; how many battles may have been fought, or how stubborn the opposition may have been; and the degree to which the persistent championship of a few older authors of eminence, or the admiration of a small group whose opinions were respected outside, has counted. I have seen take shape the reputations of several authors of my own and a younger generation: some seemed to come just at the right moment for facile success, others just when the resistance was strongest. But there must always be, as there usually has been in smaller societies, some group of people – not all of them writers themselves – living in the same place and knowing each other well, who will take up such a book and discuss it enthusiastically. Such groups are often called cliques, or even harder names, by people outside who may be slightly envious, and who prefer to notice their faults rather than their merits. But they can only justly be called cliques when they have no influence outside, or when their judgement is not good, or when it is distorted by personal relations. (There is all the difference, at the extremes, between a group of people who value each other's opinions because they are friends, and those who are friends because they value each other's opinions). Such small groups of people interested in, and receptive of, what is new in literature, are necessary for the development and change without which literature must die.

The small group, however, which starts a new, original and important book on its way, has the shortcomings incident to its function. It is orientated towards novelty, and may incline towards the assumption that whatever is startlingly new will therefore be first-rate, which is not always true. The first thing it sees about a new author whom it approves is his merits; the function of the group is championship of what cannot, because of its novelty, be immediately more widely enjoyed. The first approval of anything is likely to be imperfectly critical. There is a further test which comes when the book reaches a larger public; not the total public, for that it may never reach, but the middle public to which educated and sensitive people should belong. In between the small group of pioneers, and the outer circle of the public which reads books at all, is this middle public. There is still a mass of readers who care only for the transient novelty, and who read a book merely because everybody else is reading it – or because they are told by the publisher that everybody is reading it. But many of us

belong among those who can read, and enjoy, and profit by the work of genius as soon as it is a little less new; as soon as it has been accepted, and written about, and interpreted. (A good deal happens to us, in our ability to accept a new work, simply by the lapse of time. Books that seem incomprehensible when new, can come to be easier reading, not because we understand them better, but because we are used to them.) Now it is *this* public which a new work must ultimately please, if it is to be more than a literary curiosity. If the fault is not in the book, but in the public, then our civilisation is bankrupt; but if this public is in a healthy state, it is the ultimate court of decision which decides that a book is a permanent and essential part of our literature.

I am going on, finally, to explain what all this has to do with leadership in a democracy; but first I think I should mention certain dangers to literature in a democracy like ours – and I mean dangers which are essentially the same in Britain and America, dangers against which our "middle public" should be on guard. These dangers spring from the great size of democratic society, from the great numbers of the reading public, and from the great numbers of books published.

The first I have to mention is *commercialisation*. The publisher makes more money by publishing a small number of books, or "titles" as we call them, and selling these few titles in vast numbers, than by publishing a large number of "titles" each with a small sale – even though each of these books makes a small profit. Hence, with an immense public which will take the third-rate immediately, there is a strong temptation to gamble for the "best seller" – which is seldom the best book. The books which can never have a large circulation, and the books which will make their reputation only slowly, may tend to be forced out. And the pressure in this direction comes not merely from the desire of some publishers to make money quickly and in a large way. Books become, nowadays, much more expensive to produce; the price can only be kept down if you expect to sell large numbers, and the cost of producing books which cannot expect a large sale, such as new poetry, is such that the retail price may soon deter purchasers and reduce a small circulation to a negligible one. Economic pressures in publishing, in the direction of quantity against quality, might tend to bring about a gradual deterioration of the public taste.

The second danger is *contemporaneity* – a danger which is partly a consequence of commercialisation. The more publishers form the habit, or

acquire the craving to make money quickly, the more likely they are to depend upon mass production of new books, which they then allow to go out of print as soon as the demand of the moment, often artificially stimulated, has waned. Restrictions of the quantity of paper, during the war and after, forced out of print many books which should be kept in print, but which would continue to have only a small annual sale. The fault here, however, is not only on the side of the publisher, but on the side of the reading public. I think there is today a very large number of readers, who only read any book once, and who only want to read something *new* – new in the crudest sense, that of being "just out." And the tendency to read only contemporary literature extends to a more educated public which ought to know better. It is as if people nowadays had an exaggerated interest in the present, to the exclusion of any interest in the past. I used to meet people who had never read any poetry later than that of Tennyson, Browning, Longfellow and Matthew Arnold; it seems to me now that I meet many who do not appear to have read anything earlier than Gerard Hopkins and Yeats – with the exception of a few poems by John Donne. But we cannot appraise anything new, we cannot even know that it *is* new, unless we have read and enjoyed the best work of the past: for, unless you know what has been done already, how do you know that a new poet is doing something that has not been done better before? We cannot have good judgement, in any art, without knowledge of the art of the past; we cannot appreciate the importance of fresh thought without a knowledge of what has been thought in the past; and without this knowledge, we are likely to admire the trivial, the inefficient, and the second hand. We are liable to be taken in by fallacies which have been exposed long ago, and swept off our feet by ideas which may have been propounded and criticised twenty-five hundred years before our time.

The third danger is that in this immense output of contemporary writing, our reading may be successive and not cumulative. We pass from book to book, without assimilation and comparison, and without forming such a background of reading, that our knowledge enables us to find likenesses and appreciate the significant differences, between one author and another. It is quite right, at the stage at which we first meet the work of the first great author to make a deep impression upon us, that we should be carried away with enthusiasm: that is a valuable experience which you are not likely to get in later life. But when we next have the same experience, we should not let it obliterate the first from our mind. And our appreciation of every author

who comes to mean something to us, should be different because of all the others who have previously impressed us.

The fourth danger is simply that we read too many books, or too many authors, and know too little of any of them – just as, in the mere matter of information, there are nowadays so many subjects about which we should like to know something, that we are in danger of knowing too little about too many things. We each of us have to find out for ourselves just how much we can read of and assimilate – for over-eating may be as fatal as starvation. Here again, the commercial pressure of the time is unfavorable, for, under present conditions, it is not profitable to reprint the complete works of any classic author. And I think it is most desirable for one's self-education that one should cherish at least one or two authors, peculiarly congenial, of whom one knows the complete works.[13]

These are dangers to literature in a present day democracy – which may be summed up as the one danger that a democracy of educated individuals who think for themselves may transform itself into a democracy of mass-society which does not think at all. (I am not contrasting them with the dangers in a totalitarian society, for those are too obvious to need comment: nobody wants to have his reading-matter chosen, prepared and forced upon him by a Secretary for Culture trained in Moscow.) These are dangers that must be combated if we are not to be led in the wrong directions by the wrong people. They are dangers which all of us, the educated middle public, can do something about in our buying and reading of books. And this leads me to the conclusion which you may have anticipated.

In considering the question, "what does *leadership in a democracy* mean in relation to literature," I do not find this leadership wholly in the writer of exceptional gifts of imagination, thought or style. For this author cannot anticipate what the effects of his work will be. What will happen, when his words fall into a mind ready to receive them, is unpredictable, because in each mind – in each educated mind, – they will combine with those of the rest of the peculiar constellation of authors who have affected that mind, and with the thought and feeling of that particular individual, to produce something new. Nobody can have the slightest notion of what his great-grandchildren will turn out like, because, besides his own wife, whom he may think he understands, and himself, whom he ought to know he does not understand, those great-grandchildren will have a number of other ancestors who have not yet been elected. So it is with one's ideas, images,

rhythms, feelings expressed in prose or verse, in relation to what they will mean three generations hence. Therefore I must not divide or distribute, but assign the leadership and the responsibility collectively to the writer, to those who first help him, to his editors and publishers, to whatever group of people first take up his work, and finally to that larger educated public, both in his own lifetime and later, which reads and criticises this work. Now this seems to me just the sort of conclusion to which we should expect to come about a democracy, in contrast to an autocratic state of society, in which a small number of men are officially appointed "leaders" and the rest of the population is merely the mass of "the led." Of course, there will always be crises and difficulties, in the history of any society, in which we can only hope that the vision and the force of one man will save the situation. And there will always be situations in which one man, or a few men, will render a service to their society simply by standing alone in an unpopular opinion and telling their countrymen that they are wrong, with no hope of accomplishing anything except witnessing to the truth as they see it. Democracy is an ideal, and we must not expect ideals to be attainable in the world of time – ideals are not to be subjected to that test: but surely we approximate the most closely to it where we find that something works, and that in the working we find it impossible to distinguish clearly who are the "leaders" and who are "the led." For there we find the widest diffusion of freedom and responsibility, of submission and initiative.

NOTES

1. TSE delivered the War Memorial Address at Milton Academy on 3 Nov 1948. He was at this time staying at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. TSE wrote to W. R. Castle on 4 Sept: "I have arranged only two lectures; and those simply for my expenses in visiting Washington and Boston. One is a lecture at the Library of Congress; the other a Foundation Address at my old school, Milton Academy. Both of them are in November."

2. Arthur Bliss Perry (1899?-1978), who served as headmaster of Milton Academy from 1947 to 1963, wrote to TSE on 15 Apr 1948 acknowledging his acceptance of the invitation and later sent him copies of the previous lectures of this Foundation. The statement of the War Memorial Foundation plan, adopted in 1922, stipulated that the lectures should deal with "the responsibilities and opportunities attaching to leadership in a democracy." TSE replied on 21 May: "Although I do not seem to fit any of the denominations of political or commercial administration or professional work, and it is doubtful whether I can be said to have any profession at all except that of a publisher, it seems to me that I could from the point of view of my own type of experience produce a lecture which would otherwise fulfil the requirements of the Foundation. I shall therefore meditate on my subject and look forward very much to revisiting the School in the autumn."

3. "gauleiter" (OED): "A political official controlling a district under Nazi rule; also *transf.* and *fig.*, a local or petty tyrant"; "Commissar" (OED): "In the Russian Republic and later the Soviet Union: a government representative or (later) a Communist Party official appointed to oversee political instruction and ensure political reliability, esp. in a military unit."

4. In vol 3 of *The Endless Adventure* (London: Macmillan, 1935), F. S. Oliver quotes the following remark attributed to Disraeli by the German statesman Prince Bernhard von Bülow: "Real statesmen are inspired by nothing else than their instinct for power and love of country" (143). In his 1935 address "The Christian in the Modern World," TSE had defined *The Endless Adventure* as "brilliant" and quoted and discussed the previous statement (5.191).

5. The profile of TSE's unnamed writer is probably that of Ezra Pound.

6. TSE may be referring to Richard Aldington, who was assistant editor of the *Egoist* in 1914-16 and of the *Criterion* in 1923-24.

7. The seven pamphlets known as *Draper's Letters* (1724-25) were written by Jonathan Swift under the pseudonym M. B. Drapier.

8. Edmund Burke's Speech on Conciliation [with America, 1775] is in the list of books TSE read for his Harvard exam in 1904 (*L1* 5). In *NTDC*, which was about to be published, he quoted from Burke's *Remarks on the Policy of the Allies* (1793) (7.286, n.66). TSE was currently an active member of the Burke Club in London.

9. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), Kant argued that the first task of philosophy is to understand the limits of human understanding. This led to his distinction between the *phenomenon* (knowable through experience) and the *noumenon* or thing-in-itself (unknowable). In the next generation, J. G. Fichte rejected the notion of the *noumena* in *Foundations of Natural Right* (1796), asserting that nothing exists that is not grounded in self-consciousness. This prepared the way for Hegel, whose absolute idealism identified reality with consciousness. While Kant argued that "pure reason" is limited (*phenomena*), Fichte and Hegel insisted that there are no limits, no "things-in-themselves" (*noumena*).

10. In *Epistola* X (numbered XIII in some editions) (1314-17 or 1319-20), addressed to his patron Cangrande della Scala, Dante refers to the social purpose of the *Commedia*, namely, to remove people from a state of spiritual misery and lead them to salvation. In "Poetry and Propaganda" (1930) TSE wrote: "you have only to read what Dante says in the *Convivio* and in his letter to Can-Grande to understand what his purpose was" (4.27). In Virgil's *Aeneid*, the journey of the legendary hero Aeneas from Troy to Italy led to the founding of Rome. As TSE later stated in "Virgil and the Christian World" (1951) , "Aeneas is egregiously a man of destiny, since upon him the future of the Western World depends" (7.634). Milton's aim, expressed explicitly in *Paradise Lost* I.25-26, is to "assert Eternal Providence, / And justify the ways of God to men."

11. Possibly an echo of Horace's statement in *Ars poetica* ("The Art of Poetry") that poets wish either to instruct or delight (ll. 333-34). In his copy of *The Works of Horace*, trans. C. Smart (Philadelphia: David McKay, s.d.), TSE marked ll. 343-44 in "The Art of Poetry": "He who joins the instructive with the agreeable, carries off every vote, by delighting and at the same time admonishing the reader" (Houghton).

12. In 1851, the German scientist and philosopher Hermann Ludwig Ferdinand von Helmholtz (1821-94) invented the groundbreaking ophthalmoscope, which he called

"Augenspiegel" (eye mirror), an instrument that enabled physicians to observe the retina and adnexa of the eye.

13. In his 1952 address to members of the London Library, TSE expressed this view in stronger terms: "no one, I hold, is well educated unless he knows the *complete* works of several great authors and of a few favourite minor ones" (7.760).

Lambeth and Education: The Report Criticized

The Guardian, 5402 (1 July 1949) 310, 311[1]

I propose to examine clauses 27 to 35 inclusive of the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference Report. These clauses are headed *Education*. I have chosen this section for discussion, because it can be treated without raising any questions of Faith or Order, or trespassing upon any episcopal preserves into which the intrusion of a lay mind might conduce to a breach of the peace. Nothing that I say, therefore, will have any direct bearing upon any other section of the Resolutions or the report; but some general questions about the purpose of the conference and its methods will inevitably emerge.

The clauses on Education, which are found on page 33 of the Resolutions, have to be considered in relation to the chapter entitled "Christian Education" in the committee report on "The Church and the Modern World" which begins on page 22 of the Report Section. The report is on "*Christian* Education," whereas the Resolutions with which we are concerned are headed simply "Education." The Resolutions, therefore, appear to embrace a wider area than the report; and this impression is confirmed by the first of these clauses, no. 27, which reads as follows:

> The Conference holds that the Church should press for the best educational opportunity everywhere for all, without racial distinction and without privilege for wealth. [33]

The interpretation of this statement must depend to a large extent upon the assumptions in the mind of the particular reader. The statement is not limited to *religious* education, or apparently to *Christian* education, by which I mean here not only education in Church schools and in universities of ecclesiastical foundation, but education against a background of Christian culture. We appear to have in mind here "education" abstracted from religion whether Christian or other. There are two dangers in interpreting the phrase "the best educational opportunity for all." We may be assuming that "education" is ideally one and the same education for everyone, and that the goal is uniformity the world over. We may then assume that everyone should have as much of this uniform education as possible. We may forget that the term "education" is merely a convenience for indicating a great variety of

disciplines for different gifts, different social needs, different degrees of ability, and widely varying civilizations. A further danger to which we are exposed is due to the uncertainty of the meaning of the word "opportunity." In the first place, "educational opportunity" has its real significance in relation to the scale of values according to which a society respects or despises one occupation or another. In a society in which learning is admired, it may mean the opportunity to become a schoolmaster; in a society in which the social status of the schoolmaster is inferior, it may mean the opportunity to become a works manager. In a society of one kind, it may be the opportunity to become a captain of industry; in another, the opportunity to become a well-paid civil servant. We cannot speak of education as if it was something universally desired for its own sake: it is desired in relation to the kind of activity that each individual wants to pursue. Nor, alas, do people always want to pursue those activities for which they are best endowed; their ambitions depend very largely upon the values of the society in which they live. And these values may be false ones. By *education*, in the phrase "educational opportunity," we may also mean two different things. "Education" may mean either "formal instruction" or "profiting by this instruction." The dunce who has been pushed through a good school and a good university, with the aid of coaches paid by his parents, has had "educational opportunity": it remains a question whether he should have had it. We are apt to slip into the assumption that "educational opportunity" means giving everybody as much formal instruction, and for as many years of their lives, as possible.

There is another difficulty about "the best educational opportunity for all." A part of the best opportunity is having the best teachers, and the best teachers cannot be provided for all, because there have never been, and never will be enough of them to go round; and no amount of *pressing* on the part of the Church can meet this deficiency. This objection on my part may at first sound captious. I am saying only what is obvious: but it is an inconvenient fact which is frequently passed over in our schemes. We incline to belittle the importance of those conditions which we cannot plan for or legislate into existence. Into "the best opportunity" there will also enter an element of the unplannable, the unpredictable, and so far as human designs go, the capricious.

"WITHOUT RACIAL DISTINCTION"

We come now to the phrase "without racial distinction." Here it matters a great deal what sort of illustrations come to our minds when we use the

phrase. That there are inferior races, such that not even the most promising child of one of those races should receive more than a limited education, is an opinion now in such disrepute that I should not have thought it worth explicit repudiation. If the phrase means that where two races live in community, as white and negro in the United States and in South Africa, no man should be limited in his education merely by reason of his colour, I am of course wholly in agreement. But I am here concerned not only with what the resolutions meant to their framers, but with what they may mean to their readers. Especially if we are inclined to employ the term "education" as meaning one particular norm of education, "without racial distinction" may mean to us "without distinction between one culture and another." We always incline to think our own form of education, which has partly been planned and partly arisen out of our own culture, the best absolutely, and therefore to wish to impose it upon other peoples. And just as "the best opportunity" may mean different things at different times in the same place, so it may mean, properly, different things in different places. I am apprehensive on this point, because the conference has elsewhere given its general approval to the world-wide movement for "literacy."[2] Literacy seems all-important to us: it is a question whether there are not societies in which "education" need not include the ability to read and write and in which literacy could have only a destructive influence.

We come finally to the phrase "without privilege for wealth"; this is perhaps the most difficult to interpret. By "wealth," in the first place, we may mean excessive or exceptional affluence or we may mean any disparity in purchasing power. I do not see how we can limit the term here to gross excess of wealth, since, even were persons in this position more numerous, there is a point beyond which money will not buy a "better education"; it will only provide irrelevant trimmings; and excessive spending power in the hands of a schoolboy or undergraduate might even be an obstacle to his getting a good education. The good education, in the usual sense, is very largely provided by parents who have saved especially for this purpose, or restricted their expenditure in other ways, in order to do the best they can for their children. Now a system of education towards which the parents make no voluntary contribution (and it is only in such a system, surely, that privilege of wealth is wholly abolished) can only be a universal State system. We shall come to the question of the Church, and State Education, in clause 29. For the moment, the question is this: if parents are not allowed to make contributions specifically towards the education of their own children, but only

as taxpayers towards education in general, can they be allowed to decide what sort of education their children will have? Furthermore, if "wealth" however we define it, is to retain no privilege for education, what privilege *can* it justly retain? Is education a very special case in which no privilege can be tolerated? Must not the same principle be applied to everything else, until it is laid down as a self-evident necessity of social justice, that no one must be allowed to save money, since the command of capital affords privileges to the possessor, denied to the penniless or to those who spend their income as they receive it? I am perplexed by these questions.

I pass now to the next section, 28, which need not long detain us:

> The Conference gratefully recognizes the admirable work done by Christian teachers throughout the world and urges Churchmen to bring the opportunity of this high calling to the attention of young men and women. [33]

I should say that this was intended simply as a graceful testimonial to those Christian teachers who have done good work since the previous Lambeth Conference. "Christian teachers" here does not appear to denote only teachers of divinity, but all teachers whatever their subject who are themselves Christians. It would suggest that the conference considers it desirable that all teachers should be Christians, though this is not explicitly affirmed. For otherwise, they might have extended the compliment to all good teachers, whether Christian or not; or else restricted it to Christians who are practising Anglicans or Protestant Episcopalians.

Clause 29 gives a little more trouble. It is as follows:

> The Conference while giving full support to State education is convinced that there is a unique value for the community in the long tradition of Church education. The Conference believes that the freedom of experiment which this tradition affords and the religious, moral, and social training which is its specific purpose are invaluable for the best interests of education and that everything possible should be done to open the benefits of such Church education to all who desire them. [33]

There is, of course, an ambiguity about the term "Church" which we meet throughout the whole report. I take it that here is meant, also, by "Church education," schools run by other denominations than those represented in the conference. The real difficulty of this clause is the word "full." Does this mean that the conference supports the claim of the State to control all

education, or merely that it recognizes that we cannot have all the education we need, unless the State finances and therefore controls the larger areas of education? The latter interpretation would indicate *full* support only with reservations; the former is inconsistent with the high claims made for Church schools. Not only the religious, but the moral and social training aimed at in Church schools is described as *invaluable*: it is therefore, one infers, superior to that given by State schools. The Church schools are stated to have freedom in experiment; one infers that State schools are hampered in experiment. And if we are to do everything possible to open the benefits of Church school education to all who desire them (in the first instance, parents) are we not called upon to try to persuade everybody to desire them? Aside from the question how such schools are to be financed, except by such parents as have "the privilege of wealth," would not the goal be the supplanting of State education by Church schools? And this would hardly be giving "full support" to State education.

No light upon this question is thrown by clause 46, which is among those under the heading "The Christian Way of Life":

> The Conference affirms that education should be more than a training for a livelihood or even for citizenship. It should be based upon the fact that every child is a child of God created by God for citizenship in heaven as well as on earth. [36]

I do not see how the conference can give full support to State education unless the State recognizes, and calls upon its teachers to recognize, the truth of this last sentence.

Clause 30 is merely a tribute, similar to that conveyed by Clause 28, to Sunday and Day School teachers and youth leaders.[3] Clause 31 calls for a little more attention. It reads as follows:

> The Conference welcomes the statutory provision made in England in 1944 for religious instruction and worship in schools, as well as similar developments in other countries. We urge universities and training colleges to provide adequately for the training of teachers in this field. [34]

We must scrutinize this word "welcome" closely, for we find the conference, in the course of this report, welcoming a number of things. "Welcome" may apply to the intention, or to the result. To welcome the statutory provision for religious instruction and worship in the Education Act of 1944, may be to welcome the fact that the need for such instruction is recognized in the

Act, or it may mean to give full approval to the terms of this provision.[4] My impression at the time was that a good deal of sharp criticism was aroused, not only of the inadequate support given to, and the heavy demands made upon, Church schools, but concerning the kind of religious teaching designed by the Act. But one may ask also, how many of the bishops from overseas (and bishops everywhere, I have in mind, are busy and usually overworked) can be expected to have made a close study of this Act and of its subsequent operation?

CHAPELS AT UNIVERSITIES

> Clause 32: The Conference welcomes the steps taken in some universities to make provision for courses designed to give general instruction in Christian faith and practice to those who are not students in theology. It also urges that a chapel for corporate worship should be provided in every university and university college. [34]

Here it is not clear whether the conference merely welcomes the recognition of the need for Christian teaching implied by the provision of such courses, or gives approval to the actual curricula instituted. But an important question appears to me to be a question which is avoided – the question of the value of chapels for non-sectarian worship, and the type of service possible in them. No doubt some lessons could be learned from the operation of such chapels in certain American universities.

> Clause 33: The Conference calls special attention to the urgent need for more effective and continuous adult education through study and discussion. It believes that adult religious education should be included in the normal work of parish and diocese. [34]

Here I only regret that the resolution has bracketed together two very important problems which I should like to dissociate from each other. The provision of facilities for adult education is desirable: it is for those who want it and are in a position to take advantage of it, and these will come for the most part from among those who are aware of the inadequacy of their education before they began to earn a living. But a life-long study of the Christian faith should be an obligation of all practising Christians, according to their type of mind and intellectual capacities, and should be enjoined upon them. And for an adult who is able to think at all, a non-sectarian Christianity is inadequate mental food. This reflects upon the previous resolution: a

non-sectarian teaching is also inadequate at the university stage. In those sections of the report which deal with religious education, no specific reference is made to the tenets of the Anglican Church.

The last two resolutions concerned with education have to do with films and broadcasting:

> 34. Recognizing the great influence of films and broadcasting both for good and for evil, we welcome the efforts now being made to improve their quality: sharing the anxiety of many teachers and Educational Authorities lest the films shown to children should undermine sound educational influences, we particularly welcome the provision of wholesome films and broadcasts for children.
>
> 35. The Conference urges further investigation and experiment on the part of the Church in film production and radio programmes as a means of religious and missionary education, and full co-operation with experts in these fields. [34]

There appears to be nothing to criticize in these two clauses.

The report on Christian Education, of the committee on The Church and the Modern World, occupies five pages of small type.[5] While the resolutions do less than justice, owing to their necessary brevity, to some of the matter in the report, they do elicit an element of contradiction and uncertainty which is less patent in the fuller treatment. In the report, the claim for a Christian education is made in strong terms:

> We see the circumference of education as wide as the earth itself and all the fullness thereof, but at the centre of it, investing it all with a unity of significance and direction, we see specifically Christian education. Man needs to be redeemed through Christ and the Holy Spirit in His Church from self-centredness which leads him to assert himself against the terms on which life is given him, against the simple facts that "it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves" and that He has surrounded us with other children who are equally of His making. Man needs to be educated for eternal fellowship with God in the Communion of Saints. Therefore we must claim to teach the Christian Faith, the truth of God to every man. Such education is the birthright of every individual as made in the image of God, while the human race as a whole needs, for its progress and even for its survival, that "all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." And when, in any part of the world, a State refuses us this

> claim, we must be careful, at all costs, not to render unto Caesar the things that are God's. [23]

On the other hand, "The State should make available for all a liberal education as well as a technical training" [22-23]. I think that the term "liberal education" needs defining, and the possible varieties of liberal education classified. It is not clear whether "available" means that parents, and adult students, can have it if they want it, or whether it is implied that all compulsory education should be liberal as well as technical. But, it may be asked, in what sense acceptable to the framers of this part of the report will an education be "liberal" unless "specifically Christian education" is "at the heart of it"? And furthermore, is not *specifically* Christian education, education in the tenets of some specific Christian communion? And if specifically Christian education is at the heart of education, is not, for example, a training in the understanding of the right use of the Sacraments at the heart of Christian education, from the point of view of Anglican bishops?

TWO WEAKNESSES

The weaknesses of the resolutions and the report on education seem to be two. One is the avoidance of an issue by referring everywhere to "Christian education" and nowhere specifically to "Anglican education." To those who profess the Catholic faith it is not merely a matter of holding more beliefs, and having a rather more elaborate liturgy than those Christians who do not: it is not merely "Christianity" *plus* optional trimmings; the difference is structural, and the identities cannot be simply abstracted. This obscurity, in the report and resolutions, is a particular case of the more general obscurity which consists in speaking of "the Church" without making clear whether or where, it means "the Catholic Church" or the ecumenical Church. And the second weakness is precisely this ambiguity and inconsistency in the attitude towards the State and towards State education.

I am aware that in choosing for dissection the part of the report that is concerned with education I have chosen one of the weaker parts. I should not like it to be supposed that I should be so critical of the Lambeth Report as a whole. There is much that one should be thankful for, and much that should be subjected to a different kind of criticism. But the weaknesses present in my section do suggest certain questions about the conference as a whole, about its purpose, scope and methods which cannot be limited to its treatment of the subject of education.

There is one class of affirmations which puzzle me because I should have thought they were otiose. To affirm what every Christian, surely, believes, strikes me as a waste of time. The first resolution of all, for instance, "affirms that man has a spiritual as well as a material nature."[6] I should like to have explained to me why such an affirmation should be deemed necessary, or why the teachers of the faith should affirm that "no view of man can be satisfactory which confines his interests and hopes to this world and to this life alone."[7] If it had to be said, I should have preferred the word "true" to "satisfactory."

There is another class of affirmations, that on matters on which I see no reason why bishops should be better qualified to pronounce than anybody else: "The Conference believes that the nations of the world must have an organ of co-operation to which each nation must be ready to yield some of its sovereignty."[8] Now, we all want to see all the nations of the world living together in peace and amity, and to the utmost reciprocal benefit. The way towards this end indicated in this sentence may be the best way, but it is still a debatable matter; and I do not see what is gained by such a resolution passed by a congress of bishops unless they have some new argument to put forward, based on Christian premisses, and some useful suggestions as to steps to be taken to bring it about. Clause 7 (under "The Church and the Modern World") reads like a restatement of the familiar "Four Freedoms."[9] Clause 14 "urges the statesmen of the world together with their people to do their utmost to frame a world policy for the fuller development and a juster distribution of the world's economic resources" [31]; some of us will regret that the conservation as well as the development (or exploitation) of the world's resources is not mentioned. The vagueness of all these aspirations becomes the more noticeable when we come across a definite proposal of a kind such that the pronouncement of a conference of bishops is relevant and authoritative: I instance the demand that Jerusalem and its immediate environs be put under permanent international control, with freedom of access to sacred places reserved for the adherents of the three religions.[10]

As to which kind of resolution is that with which I began this paper – the resolution which holds that the Church should press for the best educational opportunity everywhere for all – we shall hold varying opinions. But I myself see no point in it without any examination of its implications, and without a statement of just what value is attached to educational opportunity which does not include the opportunity for education in the Christian faith.

It seems as if the conference had felt constrained to say something about matters very much in the public mind, whether they were matters on which bishops were specially qualified, *qua* bishops to pronounce or not, lest it should be reproached for ignoring them. And yet the effect is sometimes of greater timidity and uncertainty than would have been suggested by their passing these matters by. "The Conference urges [in one resolution] that the use of atomic energy be brought under such effective international inspection and control as to prevent its use as a weapon of war."[11] Now after all the negotiations that have taken place, all the discussion, during the last two or three years, such a pronouncement by any one bishop would sound rather empty: and I do not see why it should be any more significant at this time when pronounced anonymously by 325 bishops. The voice of the Church should not sound so much like the voice of public opinion of two years ago; it should have something of its own to say on matters on which it speaks at all.

If the bishops appear to have felt called upon to express their minds on general matters of interest, on which they can speak not as the Church but only as 325 eminent public men, they appear, on the other hand, to have felt some delicacy in speaking as bishops of a particular Communion, as well as in criticizing any dangerous tendencies in their own nations. They speak well and boldly about Communism, as well as (by implication) about Nazism, and many of those who oppose Communism on worldly grounds might ponder their words and consider that the only ultimate objection to Communism is the Christian one.[12] But while we are warned against "such usurpation of power by the State as is opposed to the basic truths of Christianity,"[13] we are at the same time told that the conference welcomes "the growing concern [and care] of the modern State for its citizens"; we are exhorted as Church members to accept our own political responsibility and "co-operate with the State and its officers in their work" – a kind of extension of the XXXVIIth Article.[14] And there is much in the report with which I should feel no dissatisfaction if it were a report of a Conference of the British Council of Churches; but there are times when I have to remind myself that it is not the British Council of Churches for which the report speaks, but an assembly of three hundred and twenty-five bishops of the Anglican Communion.

I hope that I have not expressed myself immodestly: but I feel some bewilderment, under the impression that at times the conference has affirmed in places views on matters outside those on which bishops can speak with authority; and that at other times it has said less than we might hope for, as

bishops of a particular Communion speaking to the laity under their particular care. And I should be glad if it could be made clear to me that behind the resolutions and report there was a clear understanding of the scope and limitations of such a conference. There must be other laymen besides myself who would like to know how to read the report: who would like to know to what extent they are listening to authority – and when I say "authority" I am not taking as a standard the Council of Chalcedon;[15] I mean only the authority which we should concede to any equally comprehensive convention of scientists or professional men discussing those subjects to which they have devoted a lifetime.

Finally, I must appeal to students of English prose style on a matter which is not susceptible of wholly objective demonstration. It seems to me that the actual writing of the report is at its weakest where the authors feel the least certain of what they ought to say: that is, first, when they feel obliged to express a view on some question of public interest which they do not wish to be accused of avoiding, and second, when they feel obliged to avoid the mention of differences between Anglican and other Protestant positions. Where they speak of The Unity of the Church, of the Anglican Communion, or of the Church's Doctrine of Marriage, Baptism or Confirmation, we may or may not as individuals agree with the resolutions and the affirmations.[16] We may or may not be able to accept the statements about one or another scheme of reunion. But what is said on these matters is not, on the whole, open to the kind of criticism which I have been applying. It does not make use of undefined words emotionally highly charged, such as "democracy," "justice," or "privilege"; it does not "welcome," "urge," "summon," "call," "appeal" or "stress." I am not without hope that a clear understanding of what the Lambeth Conference is for, and what it should do for the hungry sheep of our fold, might lead to such results that it would be impossible for any layman to feel compelled to criticize the Conference Report as I have criticized the Report of 1948.

NOTES

1. TSE was approached by the BBC on 4 Nov 1948 to give a talk for the Third Programme on the Report of the Lambeth Conference. He wrote to Mary Hutchinson on 23 Jan 1949: "This weekend I must go to Pusey House to read them a paper blasting the bishops for the Lambeth Report" and to Mary Trevelyan on 8 Mar: "I have to entertain the All Souls Club that night and I doubt whether they will find my turn about the Lambeth Conference so screamingly funny as the Puseyites did." TSE sent the talk to the Dean of Chichester on 1 Apr who evidently passed it on to the editor of the *Guardian* Paul Shuffrey, who wrote to TSE on 3 May to request his

permission to print it. TSE replied on 16 May that he had never contemplated publishing this paper, but he consented saying it should be entitled "Lambeth on Education." He added: "I think that a few small deletions of phrases appropriate to platform delivery are desirable and I have made some small alterations of this kind on the enclosed text." The printed text contains printer's errors and omissions that have been corrected against the TS and the copy of the article marked by TSE (King's H2k and HC2.1.3[15]). The subtitles were added by the editors of the *Guardian*.

The Lambeth Conferences, first held in 1867, are ten-yearly gatherings of Anglican bishops convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury. After the seventh conference in 1930, TSE wrote "Thoughts after Lambeth" (4.223). The eighth, attended by 330 bishops, took place from 1 July to 6 Aug 1948 and was presided over by Archbishop Geoffrey Francis Fisher. TSE quotes from *The Lambeth Conference 1948: The Encyclical Letter from the Bishops; together with Resolutions and Reports*, published in London by S.P.C.K. on 18 Aug 1948.

2. TSE discussed UNESCO's "ambitious" campaign against illiteracy in his letter to the editor of the *Continental Daily Mail* of 12 Nov 1947 (7.45).

3. "The Conference affirms that the Church owes a deep debt of gratitude to Sunday and Day School teachers and youth leaders who, in the face of increasing difficulties, have forwarded the Church's teaching ministry to children and young people with devoted service. The Conference emphasizes the responsibility of individual clergymen and parishes in the work of Christian education" (33).

4. The 1944 Education Act made religious instruction compulsory in all schools. The Education Act also made it compulsory to have a daily act of collective worship, usually during the morning assembly.

5. Part II: Reports of Committees (22-26). This second part begins a new pagination.

6. Resolution 1 [29]

7. Resolution 4 [29]

8. Resolution 15 (31)

9. In the Four Freedoms speech delivered by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt on 6 Jan 1941, he suggested four basic freedoms that everyone throughout the world should enjoy: freedom of speech and expression; freedom of worship; freedom from want; freedom from fear. Resolution 7 states: "The Conference declares that among such rights are security of life and person; the right to work, to bring up a family, and to possess personal property; the right to freedom of speech, of discussion and association, and to accurate information; and to full freedom of religious life and practice, and that these rights belong to all men irrespective of race or colour" (30).

10. In the second paragraph of Resolution 16, the Conference "urges the United Nations to place Jerusalem and its immediate environs under permanent international control, with freedom of access to sacred places secured for the adherents of the three religions" (31).

11. Resolution 11 (30)

12. Resolution 25 states: "The Conference, while recognizing that in many lands there are Communists who are practicing Christians, nevertheless declares that Marxian Communism is contrary to Christian faith and practice, for it denies the existence of God, Revelation, and a future life; it treats the individual man as a means and not an end; it encourages class warfare; it regards the moral law not as absolute but as relative to the needs of the State" (33).

13. Resolution 18 (32)

14. Resolution 19 (32). Resolution 37 states: "The Conference urges all Church people to look upon their membership of Christ in the Church as the central fact in their lives. They should regard themselves as individually sharing responsibility for the corporate life and witness of the Church in the places where they live" (35).

15. The Council of Chalcedon (451 AD) rejected the idea that Jesus had only one nature, asserting instead that Christ combines two natures, Divine and human, into one person. The Council's dogmatic teachings were deemed infallible by the Roman Catholic as well as the Eastern Orthodox Church.

16. Resolutions 50-77 deal with "The Unity of the Church" (37-46); 78-91 with "The Anglican Communion" (46-48); 92-99 with "The Church's Discipline in Marriage" (49-50); and 100-112 with "Baptism and Confirmation" (50-52).

Broadcast-appeal for the Testaccio Cemetery in Rome

The British Ambassador to Italy, Sir Victor Alexander Louis Mallet (1893-1969), whom TSE met during his British Council tour of Sweden in spring 1942 and of Italy in Dec 1947, wrote on 30 Apr 1949 inviting him to give a short broadcast for the BBC Home Service a few days after the launch of his appeal for funds for the Testaccio Cemetery. TSE drafted his three-page appeal between 11 and 18 June 1949, writing to Osbert Sitwell on 11 June: "my next job is to prepare a five-minute broadcast appeal for the Testaccio Cemetery in Rome"; and to Mary Trevelyan on 18 June: "I have written a draft of my broadcast appeal for the Testaccio (Italian for Tortoise) cemetery."

TSE likely recorded the appeal for later broadcast on an available "Service" spot; there is no specific reference to it on the Home Service daily programs of late June or early July. Mallet's letter to the editor of the *Times*, entitled "The Testaccio Cemetery," appeared on 2 July 1949 (5). TSE misspells "cemetery" as "cemetary" throughout the TS, here corrected.

All foreign visitors to Rome know the Testaccio Cemetery, also known as The Old Protestant Cemetery, hard by the Pyramid of Cestius. For over two hundred years it has been the place of sepulture for foreign residents and visitors, Christians other than Roman Catholic, who have died there. This cemetery has never been the responsibility of the Roman or the Italian authorities. It is administered by an international committee, of which the British Ambassador, Sir Victor Mallet, is now the head.[1]

Before I speak of the needs of this cemetery I wish to remind you of its peculiar claim to British support. In these two hundred and more years, Rome has had more British visitors and residents than those of any other nation; and the majority of the graves in the cemetery are British. And two of the English graves are illustrious. The cemetery has long been a place of pilgrimage, not only for the compatriots of the dead, but for the visitors of every nationality who admire English poetry. Here are the graves of Keats and of Shelley; and near them the graves of Severn, the friend of Keats, and Trelawney, the friend of Shelley – those friends whom lovers of Keats and Shelley will always hold in remembrance.[2]

You know the stanza in *Adonais* in which Shelley refers to the grave of Keats, the stanza beginning

> Go thou to Rome – at once the Paradise,
> The grave, the city, and the wilderness . . .

I cannot quote it now in full, but he goes on to say

> A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;
> And grey walls moulder round . . .[3]

His words describing the cemetery then, are startlingly true of it to-day. The violets and anemones flower as profusely as ever they did; but the walls are not only mouldering but shattered. Wall and chapel were seriously damaged during the bombardment of Rome six years ago.[4] During the war the whole cemetery suffered from inevitable neglect. The funds out of which expenses of upkeep were formerly defrayed, were invested in securities, and these securities are now almost valueless. A sum of £2000 is urgently needed, to arrest further decay, and to restore the cemetery to its former condition.

Now, there is first the plain appeal on the ground that in this cemetery the English dead are more numerous, and more illustrious, than those of any other country. But, as I said, the Testaccio is also a place of pilgrimage for lovers of English poetry of every race and language. What will they think of us if we fail to show respect for the cemetery in which Keats and Shelley lie? Poetry is the art of which it is thought we should be most proud. And finally, at a time when Italy has to face so many and perplexing problems of reconstruction, we should be ashamed to expect Italy to assume responsibility for such English graves as these. On the contrary, we have an opportunity of recognising the immense debt that English poetry, and English poets, owe to Italy: not only to her literature and art, but also to the Italian land. There many of our poets from time to time have lived, there they have drawn much inspiration.

I am not now appealing for the future maintenance of the cemetery: only for funds needed for immediate and urgent repair, to halt decay and to restore decency. I ask for £2000. Surely this is an appeal which has a claim upon all who feel pride in the English poets, and who care for that foreign country and city which have meant so much to English poets.

Please send your subscriptions to Barclays Bank Limited, Chief Foreign Branch, 168 Fenchurch Street, London E.C.3., Marked "Testaccio Cemetery." I will repeat that . . . Barclays etc.

NOTES

1. The Cimitero protestante (Protestant Cemetery) in Rome, officially called the Cimitero acattolico (Non-Catholic Cemetery), is located on Mount Testaccio near Porta San Paolo alongside the Pyramid of Cestius. The earliest recorded burial dates back to 1738.

2. TSE had been a member of the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, one of whose duties was to look after the graves of the two poets in the Testaccio Cemetery, since July 1932. However, he wrote to Victor Mallet on 19 May 1949 that "I have never visited their graves in the Testaccio."

The English painter Joseph Severn (1793-1879) traveled to Italy with Keats in Sept 1820 and looked after him until his death on 23 Feb 1821. Severn died in Rome in 1879. The biographer and novelist Edward John Trelawny (1792-1881) was a friend of Shelley and Byron, and, though he died in England, his ashes were buried next to Shelley's grave.

3. Stanzas 49, 50, ll. 433-34; 441-42. The latter lines are also quoted in the article "A Cemetery in Rome," which appeared on the same page as Sir Victor Mallet's appeal in the *Times*.

4. Rome was bombed on several occasions in 1943 and 1944 before the city was freed by the Allies on 4 June 1944. TSE had broadcast a message on the BBC on the occasion of the liberation of Rome on 5 June 1944 (see 6.507).

The Aims of Poetic Drama: The Presidential Address to the Poets' Theatre Guild

London: The Poets' Theatre Guild, 1949. Pp. 7, [1].[1]

It seemed to me high time, and seemed to Mr. Martin Browne suitable, that the Poets' Theatre Guild and its President should make each other's acquaintance.[2] The function, if it may be called a function, of the President of a Society like this, is a very limited one; it is not his business to be acquainted with all that goes on, or to take part in the consultations that lead to particular manifestations of the Society's activity. What he has to do, I think, is just enough to escape the imputation of being a figurehead – that point is finally reached when a president forgets that he is the president and cannot remember ever having become so. It sometimes happens to people to see their names on the printed form of some society with which they cannot remember having associated themselves. That is not at all true of the present case. But if I do not need to be reminded, perhaps the Guild itself does. Therefore the President should be seen and heard, at least once annually. I shall speak briefly: I shall not pretend that it is because I am afraid of boring you, because I should have been perfectly ready to bore you at length if other pressing duties had left me the leisure to prepare myself at length.

Such a society as the Poets' Theatre Guild has several interconnected purposes. In bringing together those who are interested in poetic drama it should help to educate both authors and audiences. It is not simply to provide audiences for the plays that poets write, or to provide poets for the audiences. What I mean is, that both audiences and dramatists, for contemporary poetic drama, are still in the making, and it is the business of audiences to educate the poets, as much as it is the business of poets to educate the audiences. For modern poetic drama is still very experimental. I do not believe that there is one poet in the theatre today, who can feel assured that he has found the right form, the right idiom, the right range of human emotions and experiences to manipulate. In consequence, one is, in every play, trying something a little different. No two plays by a serious poet will be attempting quite the same thing; and no two poets are attempting quite the same thing. At present, it is each for himself. And if the plays are so different from

each other, how can we expect any audience to be able to form definite and accurate judgments?

A good deal of the work to be done, for the next generation or so, is in training the *critical* sense, both of author and audience – to say nothing of the need for training professional critics of poetic drama, for very few dramatic critics are especially equipped at present for this task. So I suggest that there might be great value in discussions, in which authors as well as members of audiences could participate; discussions in which, partly by comparing different works by the same author, and works by different authors, some conclusions might emerge as to what the poetic dramatist today ought to be trying to do, and how he ought to do it. I have put down a few remarks, which are only a hint of the sort of aims I have set before myself. I am not asserting that this is how every poetic dramatist ought to see his problem: I only suggest that if others will do something of the same sort, we might in the end be able to sort out the right aims and criteria. If we can have writers of genius – and I suppose we cherish that hope – we need not fear monotony, lack of variety.[3†] I aspire only to the reaching – not by ourselves but by the next generation profiting by our labours – of a dramatic age which will have as strong an identity as the drama of Elizabethan and Jacobean times, or of seventeenth-century France.

My first notion, then, is that poetic drama must try the most daring thing, and surrender any momentary advantage that may be got from making up with nice poetry what is lacking in dramatic quality. Specifically, I have been trying myself to get away from the chorus. There were, I believe, two motives impelling me to make so much of the chorus in *Murder in the Cathedral*. The first was that the matter of my argument was somewhat thin, and the conflict between personalities was of a rather simple kind; so I needed something to bulk the play out. The second was, that I was confident of my ability to write this kind of verse, and doubtful of my ability to handle dialogue; and I hoped to make up by choral effects what was lacking to the strictly dramatic action. This device was not wholly unsuccessful. In my second play I reduced the choral part to choral passages by persons who were also individual characters in the play. And now I have written a play in verse with no chorus whatever.

This is not to imply that I think I have succeeded; the degree of success or failure will be tested later, and at most I hope to have made progress. Nor am I saying anything about the relative merits of the choral and non-choral drama for the present age. It might be that we shall find in the end that we

want the chorus. But my own instinct is that I must learn to do without it first; and then, if I want to use it again, I shall know at least that I am doing so for a good reason, and not making use of a poetic prop.

My second notion is that I only want to write plays of *contemporary* life. For me, at least, a play set in the past, or in some fictitious place or time, would be an evasion of the immediate task. Here, again, I would remind you that I am concerned with my personal problem. And here, again, I see no reason to believe that poetic drama need limit itself in this way any more than prose drama. But I think that if poetic drama is to establish itself again, after three hundred years, it has got to show that it can deal with what appears to be the most refractory material; a plot of contemporary people, such as the men and women we know, in the usual clothes that they wear today, in the same perplexities, conflicts and misunderstandings that we and our acquaintances get involved in, and uttering no lines that are not relevant to the situation, the mood, and the dramatic action.

For the need is to show that poetic drama can deal with the material that prose drama can deal with; and until we have found out whether this can be done successfully, it is to limit ourselves in advance, if we restrict ourselves to subject-matter usually considered appropriate to verse – and therefore, in the opinion of the majority of play-goers, less important or less interesting than the subject-matter of the prose drama. But, if this is our aim, we may be asked, what is to be gained by writing in verse instead of prose? Why go to all that trouble, and add to the difficulties of both actor and audience, by saying in verse what can be said as well in prose?

Well, of course, the answer is that we have also to show that it cannot be said so well in prose. A great part, sometimes the greater part, of the kind of verse play I am imagining, could, if isolated from the rest, be said quite as well in prose. These are the parts of less intensity, those concerned with everyday affairs. I should even say that the verse, in these parts of such a play, should be unnoticeable – the audience should not be conscious of the difference from prose. But here, the purpose of the verse should be to operate upon the auditor unconsciously, so that he shall think and feel in the rhythms imposed by the poet, without being aware of what these rhythms are doing. All the time, these rhythms should be *preparing* the ear of the audience for the moments of intensity, when the emotion of the character in the play may be supposed to lift him from his ordinary discourse, until the audience feels, not that the actors are speaking verse, but that the characters in the play have been lifted up into poetry. For the effect of first-rate verse drama should be,

to make us believe that there are moments in life when poetry is the *natural* form of expression of ordinary men and women. In fact, I should say that poetry should be the norm for dramatic expression; and that it is more possible for poetry to adapt itself to the uses of prose, than for prose to perform the function of poetry. We have to show that, if poetic drama is restricted in its scope, prose drama is still more restricted; and that without poetic drama we are cut off from the expression on the stage of some of the most intense and subtle kinds of feeling.

Some verse plays of our time – and several of the most interesting – have employed a mixture of verse and prose. Except for certain special effects – and even for these the mixture can be abused – it seems to me that this is to differentiate too sharply between the poetic and the prosaic. A verse play must probably have prosaic passages, for the great part of life consists of prosaic passages; but I think that the verse used ought to be a verse capable of both the poetic and the prosaic, so that the transitions between one and the other should be imperceptible. The audience should not be immediately aware of every such transition between the poetic and the prosaic; it should be aware of every change only with a slight delay. The actors are speaking in the same rhythms, with the same vocabulary, as before, and the change is felt, not in awareness of versification, but in awareness of the higher or lower charge of energy in the whole scene.

I have tried to suggest what we must aim at in our dramatic versification. But at present there is not, and cannot be, any one form of verse for the stage – I mean, anything as identifiable as the iambic pentameter, recognisable in all our Elizabethan and Jacobean plays, in spite of strong individual idiosyncrasies amongst the dramatists, or like the Alexandrine couplet in France.[4] This is not an age of a common style or metric among poets: it is a period of considerable variety of individual styles, a period in which each poet must devise his own prosody. This is a wasteful process, but it cannot be helped. In an age of such diverse experimentation, nobody can afford to take over a kind of versification ready made. We can only hope that in the course of a generation or so, as a result of individual successes and failures – or rather, as is likely, of partial successes and partial failures – by a kind of unconscious selection and rejection, a common medium will be hammered out, within which there will still be plenty of scope for the expression of widely different poetic personalities.

I think, you see, of poetic drama as a social creation. What I hope we shall eventually get, is not one great dramatist, a solitary peak in a flat plain, but

a cluster of dramatists – not, necessarily, around a Shakespeare, because a Shakespeare is too exceptional a phenomenon even to hope for, but exhibiting a pattern of diversity and unity. *That* would be a real dramatic renascence. I regard our work today as that of the first generation only: my greatest hope is that we shall lay some foundations upon which others will come to build. The process, as I said at the beginning, is one of training and development of *both* dramatists and audiences – and I might add, of actors also – in which authors will teach audiences, and audiences will teach authors. For this reason, I hope that the Poets' Theatre Guild has a long life ahead of it, for, I think, it could play a valuable part in forming both the audiences and the authors of tomorrow.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE wrote to Mary Trevelyan on 18 June 1949 that he had written "a short discourse for the annual meeting of the Poets' Theatre Guild, some very wet little assembly of serious ladies (probably Miss Philippa Hole will be there) got together by Martin Browne." TSE read a major portion of this address for Christopher Marsden's "Wednesday Book Programme," recorded on 22 Aug and broadcast on 24 Aug on the European Service. Published in Aug 1949 for distribution gratis to members of the Poets' Theatre Guild and offered for sale at 6d.

The galley proof, signed off at the foot "Corrected T.S.E.," was sold at auction by Bonhams on 24 June 2008 and reportedly contained a number of TSE's autograph corrections, including a revision of the title (altered from "An Address on Poetic Drama to The Poets' Theatre Guild by the President") written in ink. This address should not be confused with the essay by the same title published in Nov 1949 in *ADAM* (7.376).

2. President of the Poets' Theatre Guild from 1949 to 1950, TSE wrote to E. Martin Browne on 9 May 1950: "I will come to the Annual Meeting of the Poets' Theatre Guild [11 June], and will try to be prepared to say a few words of greeting to the members, if that will give satisfaction. What I mean is that I can't undertake anything so long or carefully prepared as last year, but because I was unable to attend last year, I am all the more anxious to come on this occasion." The Guild, a discussion group for poetic drama enthusiasts, held monthly meetings for talks and theater visits and was an offshoot of the British Drama League, directed by E. Martin Browne.

3†. The description in the Bonhams auction catalog, stating that the text of TSE's galley proof is "marked up by him in pencil with the deletion of some 15 words and addition of seven," gives the preceding sentence as an example: "If we can have writers of genius – and I suppose we presume that possibility" is altered to "If we can have writers of genius – and I suppose we cherish that hope."

4. The Alexandrine is a verse form consisting of twelve syllables common in French poetry from the early modern period, including the plays of Corneille and Racine.

Mr Ezra Pound

To the Editor of *New Alliance & Scots Review*

New Alliance & Scots Review, 10 (Sept 1949) 98[1]

Sir, – I am sorry, but not surprised, that your American correspondent, writing in your August issue, should refer to Mr Ezra Pound as a "self-convicted traitor"; I am surprised as well as sorry that you should have printed these words.[2] It would seem that in the United States the press may condemn with impunity a prisoner who has not yet been judged by a Court. In Britain it is not customary for the press to pronounce a prisoner guilty or innocent until the court has delivered its verdict; and it seems to me only decent that we should maintain the same reserve with respect to citizens of other countries within the jurisdiction of their own courts – at least, when they are citizens of countries in which we believe that justice is upheld.

It should be made clear that Mr Pound – whether he be eventually judged guilty or innocent – is not in any case a "self-convicted" traitor. He himself is convinced that he was actuated by patriotic motives. Nor has he sought to escape trial: the Federal Court decided that he was of unsound mind and therefore unfit to be tried.[3]

Your correspondent appears to have accepted Mr Hillyer's statements in an article in *The Saturday Review of Literature* – a periodical to which, you tell us, your correspondent is a contributor. I do not propose to claim any of your space for an examination of Mr Hillyer's misstatements about myself.[4]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Dated 13 Aug 1949 on TS (Lilly)

2. In "An American Letter," published in the *Scots Review* of Aug 1949, James Albert Michener (1907-97), Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Tales of the South Pacific* (1948), expressed indignation at the award in Feb 1949 of the first annual Bollingen Prize in Poetry of $1,000 to Pound's *The Pisan Cantos*: "That's something like awarding the laurels for Christian works to Caligula. Pound is a self-convicted traitor to the nation, a madman in a cell escaping trial for treason, a rabid anti-semite, an anti-democrat, a pro-fascist apologist, and above all, a poet incomprehensible to the average reader" (84).

On 16 Aug, TSE wrote to Arthur V. Moore, whose letter in sympathetic defense of Pound was summarized rather than printed below that of TSE: "It seems to me that the publication of

this letter comes very close to the border of libel. Otherwise I have always been friendly with *The Scots Review* and like the paper" (Lilly). The editor of the *Scots Review* reported at the end of the summary of Moore's letter: "We much regret that we gave currency to opinions circulated with no justification and, in consequence we willingly withdraw them. The responsibility for this error is entirely that of the Editor of the *Scots Review*. We are, however, pleased to report that Mr Eliot has accepted our explanation and apology and has, as a subscriber to this journal, acknowledged them in a second friendly and generous letter."

3. Pound was indicted on thirteen counts of treason by a grand jury in Washington, D.C., in July 1943 for having broadcast more than 125 pro-Fascist editorials and manifestos over Radio Rome from 1941 to 1943. He was captured by the United States Army in Italy in May 1945 after the fall of Mussolini. He was however deemed unfit to stand trial by three government psychiatrists and detained at St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, D.C., from 1946 to 1958. Pound reported to the American journalist Reynolds Packard that his broadcasting work was meant "to save the American people" and commented: "I don't see why Fascism is contrary to the American philosophy. I am only against Roosevelt and the Jews who influence him." *Rome Was my Beat* (Secaucus, N.J.: L. Stuart, 1975), 67.

4. Robert S. Hillyer (1895-1961), American poet and professor of English at Kenyon College, published two controversial articles in the *Saturday Review of Literature* entitled "Treason's Strange Fruit" (11 June 1949) and "Poetry's New Priesthood" (18 June 1949) attacking the award of the Bollingen Prize to Pound. Michener lauded Hillyer's "commendable reporting" whereby he discovered that "the Bollingen Award took its name from the Swiss estate of Carl Jung, who was notorious pro-fascist apologist," and added: "Hillyer pointed out that one of the fellows [in American Letters of the Library of Congress] was T. S. Eliot, no longer an American citizen, and that Eliot had been instrumental in swinging the award to Pound. The reportage ended with a violent blast at the pernicious influence of Eliot, a call to arms to defend sense in poetry, and an implied request for a Congressional investigation of letters in America" (84).

TSE wrote to Léonie Adams on 5 July 1949: "with regard to Mr. Hillyer and the *Saturday Review*, I think that I am the last person who ought to throw himself into the fray at this moment, inasmuch as I am almost the principal object of attack. I should like to point out that, far from being a 'disciple of Jung,' I do not think I have ever read anything by that author: I have no opinion about his work, because I am totally ignorant of it except by rumour and report. . . . the idea of proposing Pound for the prize did not originate from me; there was no question of my trying to influence other Fellows, nor did I do so. In fact, as the one non-resident and non-citizen fellow, I do not consider that it is my place to take such initiative or to exert such pressure." For more details on this controversy, see the "Statement of the Committee of the Fellows of the Library of Congress in American Letters" (7.849).

New Translation of the Bible

To the Editor of *Theology*

Theology, 52 (Sept 1949) 336-38

Sir, – In Dr Hendry's interesting presentation of the scheme for a new translation of the Bible there are several sentences which invite inspection.[1]

Dr Hendry says: "it cannot be gainsaid that to those of our people who have not had more than an elementary schooling in language and literature there is much in the A. V. which is quite unintelligible" [204]. This is no doubt true: some of "our people" may even be baffled by Dr Hendry's verb *gainsay*. But the prospect of a translation of the Bible to be made intelligible to persons of rudimentary education is somewhat disturbing. There is much in Professor Kemp-Smith's translation of Kant's *Critique* which is unintelligible to such persons; but I do not think that a new translation of Kant, for elementary schools, is called for.[2] We must remember that there are several kinds of unintelligibility. There may be the mistranslation; there may be the archaic word or phrase which now conveys either the wrong meaning or none at all; there may be the word which baffles uneducated persons because the current use differs (*e.g., prevent*);[3] finally there is the difficulty or profundity of the meaning. To make a more intelligible translation should mean to make a translation which can be understood by those capable of understanding; it should not mean, but might easily slip into meaning, to make a translation which is *easy* to understand. For there is a great deal in the Bible which can never be made easy except by evacuation of content. It is, in fact, a very difficult book. One would like to be assured that translators, inspired by the admirable aim of making the Bible intelligible, are quite clear in their minds about the meaning of intelligibility.

Dr Hendry says that "the Church's task is not to promote literary appreciation but to proclaim the Word of God" [204]: an assertion which appears to command unquestioning assent. But if we substitute, for the slightly deprecatory phrase "promote literary appreciation" another phrase: "preserve the purity, precision, and dignity of the English language," it is a statement over which we must ponder. If and when a superior style obstructs the presentation of the Word of God, then we must agree that the Word of

God has precedence. But there is a difference between asserting a precedence and asserting that the Church has *no* responsibility towards the English language – which is what Dr Hendry's words might easily be taken to mean. If the Church re-writes its Bible and its liturgies to conform with every successive stage of deterioration of the language, the prospect is gloomy.[4] For the speech of "our people" is not only "threadbare," but incapable of expressing exact and subtle thought.[5] Dr Hendry's assertion might also be enlarged to cover the whole of ecclesiastical art – *e.g.*, "the Church's task is not to promote the appreciation of stained-glass windows, but to proclaim the Word of God" – so let us have no more stained-glass windows.

Finally, Dr Hendry attempts to anticipate a possible objection by Anglicans: the objection that "a new translation in modern English, if read in church, would jar with the language of the Prayer Book." He proceeds to say:

> On this matter it may be permitted to a non-Anglican (apart from suggesting the obvious remedy) to remark that he has listened to many sermons in Anglican churches the language of which was very far removed from that of the Book of Common Prayer, and no offence has been taken. [205]

Dr Hendry appears to hesitate to suggest the "obvious remedy"; perhaps other readers will infer, as I have done, that his obvious remedy is that we should re-write the Book of Common Prayer. But his remark that he has heard many sermons preached in language very far removed from that of the Book of Common Prayer (and in my experience I have heard very few sermons that were *not* in language very far removed from that of the Book of Common Prayer) seems to me to have no relevance.

By all means let us have a new translation; let us have several translations. Anyone who is studying the Bible with care should examine every translation available that has merit.[6†] I have myself profited from reading the Warre-Cornish translation of several Epistles;[7] for the A.V. Epistles are, like *Hamlet*, so crammed with quotations that the author's thought is obscured. But let us remember that no translation of anything is more than a *substitute*; and let us consider the possibility of employing one translation for one purpose and another for another.[8]

Your obedient servant,
T. S. ELIOT

June 20, 1949.

NOTES

1. The article by George Stuart Hendry (1904-93), "New Translation of the Bible," printed in the June issue of *Theology* (203-08), outlined a proposal presented to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for "the preparation of a new translation of the Bible in the language of the present day which might be authorized for use in public worship and instruction." The move was "inspired by the evangelical motive of desire that the gospel should be communicated to the people of our time in language they can readily understand" (203). In a letter to V. A. Demant, TSE wrote on 21 Sept 1938: "it is a commonplace that *Theology* is quite mediocre, and also sometimes inclusive of people who were better left out."

2. The Scottish philosopher Norman Kemp Smith (1872-1958) was professor of psychology and philosophy at Princeton (1906-16) and held the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Edinburgh (1919-45). His translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1929) was the standard translation at the time. TSE, who had discussed Kant's *Critique* in his Harvard essays written in the spring of 1913 for Charles Montague Bakewell's seminar (1.29, 40, 49), knew Kemp Smith as a contributor to and reviewer for the *Criterion*. TSE later compared the difficulties inherent in the Bible with those in Kant's *Critique* in "T. S. Eliot on the Language of the New Bible: 'Vulgar, Trivial, Pedantic. . .'" (1962) : "A modern translation makes it easier for us to get to grips with the thought of St Paul: it does not relieve us of the necessity of using our own minds, any more than can a translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*" (8.532). In a letter of 31 Aug 1949 to Canon A. R. Vilder, the editor of *Theology*, TSE wrote: "Thank you for your note of the 29th and for sending me Dr. Hendry's reply. I am not in general in favour of protracted controversies and it seems to me that I might well leave the last word with him at this stage. I have made my points and he has made his, and his point that Kemp-Smith's translation is more intelligible to Germans than the original is a very pleasant one." Hendry wrote a rejoinder to TSE's letter in the Oct 1949 issue of *Theology* (387-88).

3. As well as the current definitions "to anticipate or act in advance" and "to preclude, stop, or hinder," the OED provides the following scriptural meaning of the verb "prevent": "Of God, God's grace, etc.: to go before (a person) with spiritual guidance and help; *(a)* so as to anticipate a person's actions or needs; *(b)* so as to predispose (a person) to repentance, faith, and good works."

4. According to Hendry, "there is no valid theological reason why the Church should insist that the people of the twentieth century should receive the Word of God in the archaic language of the seventeenth" (204). In "The Bible as Scripture and as Literature" (1932), TSE maintained that "the Bible of the Authorised Version is the greatest masterpiece of English literature" (4.695).

5. Hendry stated: "However much we regret the fact that our people are now, for the most part, unable to appreciate the splendours of this language and that their own speech is threadbare in comparison, the Church's task is not to promote literary appreciation but to proclaim the Word of God, and the Church must not hesitate to draw the implications of its faith in the Incarnation and boldly clothe the word of the gospel in the vesture of our common speech" (204).

6†. On CC: "should examine every translation available that is not discredited."

The result was published in 1961 as *The New English Bible*, whose style was described by TSE as vulgar, trivial, and pedantic (8.530). In *Die Einheit der europäischen Kultur* (1946) TSE asserted that "we have a common classic even in our several translations of the Bible" (6.712).

7. Gerald Warre Cornish (1875-1916), a Cambridge graduate, resigned a lectureship in Greek at Manchester University to serve in World War I. While in the trenches, he paraphrased 1 and 2 Corinthians and part of Ephesians before being killed in action. *St. Paul from the Trenches: A Rendering of the Epistles to the Corinthians and Ephesians Done in France during the Great War* was published posthumously in 1937. In his 1941 "Views and Reviews: Basic Revelation," TSE defined it as "admirable" and "invaluable": "much that is dark in the familiar text becomes more intelligible in a translation into good modern English" (6.176).

8. As early as 1916, TSE had similarly commented on the purpose and limited value of translations in "Classics in English": "There are translations for the scholar – the splendid Oxford Aristotle – but these do not pretend to be literature. And what is scholarship is an introduction and commentary for the original, what is literature is enrichment of English by contact with Greek, a criticism of one language by another, a fertilisation. But there is no substitute, no *adequate* translation" (1.493).

A Message from T. S. Eliot, O.M.

To the Editor of *NINE*

NINE: A Magazine of Poetry and Criticism, 1 (Oct 1949) 6-7

Dear Peter Russell,

You have asked me for a "message" for the first number of NINE.[1] By a "message" is usually meant, I think, a word of comprehensive benediction, coupled with one or more general affirmations which illustrate the wisdom of the writer – or, if not the wisdom, at least some personal peculiarity of thought or phrase.

In starting NINE you are attempting to carry on for your time a very important literary activity which is the responsibility of those men of letters who are between twenty-five and forty years of age.[2] The value of the "little reviews" for my generation was very great: literary history will have an impressive debt to acknowledge to their editors. They were issued always under difficulties; they were never adequately supported even by that public which professed a concern for the arts and for independent thought; they lived always under sentence of death; and they always died. Nevertheless, they helped to keep literature alive. They provided little or nothing towards the dire financial needs of their contributors; but (because a man can scrape a living in other ways) they gave them something more necessary: the sense that they were not completely isolated, but had access to both generous appreciation and intelligently severe criticism. You are attempting the same thing in conditions still more difficult than ours; and the need is just as great.

So much for my good wishes – now for my wisdom. I will limit that to a word of advice. (I speak from experience, for *The Criterion*, in spite of its impressive bulk, was essentially a "little review").[3] Use distinguished seniors sparingly: one or two at a time, to advertise the review – more than that would kill it. Your elders do not now need a magazine; they can give you contributions, but they cannot write any better for you than for anyone else. As for your juniors, seek them out, but employ them tentatively and treat them severely – they need your criticism and censure just as much as they need your encouragement.[4] What you really need is neither notorious names, nor a constant flow of new ones. You do not need, either, a "programme" – I note with pleasure that your circular does not contain a manifesto. The

one thing necessary is a small number of devoted writers working together – disagreeing about many things, but seeing eye to eye about humbug. They should be in constant touch with each other; they should be exchanging ideas and bandying provocations. They should have something in common at a deeper level than programmes and manifestos; something which will incite them to do better work for you than for other editors; which will make them want to write for your paper because they will find through it the audience most likely – not to *agree* with, for agreement is of minor importance – but to *understand* what they have to say.

Yours sincerely,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The English poet and critic Irwin Peter Russell (1921-2003), a cousin of Bertrand Russell, titled this quarterly review after the Nine Muses. Issued between 1949 and 1956, it printed the work of poets, including Ezra Pound, Marianne Moore, Edwin Morgan, and George Barker. TSE wrote to James Laughlin on 24 June 1949: "I see Peter Russell quite often. He is a very likeable chap and full of energy and goodwill. I dare say that his enthusiasm may occasionally need the curb of a more cautious mind, but if properly looked after he ought to be useful."

Donald Gallup describes meeting Russell in Aug 1949: "He was full of a multitude of projects and boundless enthusiasm for all of them. About to begin editing a magazine, *Nine*, he had persuaded T. S. Eliot to write a brief note for the first issue. Our conversation that day centered on Eliot and Pound, but there was little chance for serious discussion because Peter had to dash off for another appointment, for which he was already late." *Pigeons on the Granite: Memories of a Yale Librarian* (New Haven: Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, 1988), 110. Russell printed directly under TSE's "Message" Pound's "As Sextant," noted as "a postscript to *Kulcher*, found among Mr. Pound's papers" (7).

2. Peter Russell had recently turned twenty-eight; TSE became assistant editor of the *Egoist* at the age of twenty-eight and edited the *Criterion* between ages thirty-four and fifty.

3. This was a familiar way of presenting the magazine, which had a small circulation, in the 1940s and 1950s, as TSE wrote to the editor of *Poetry* in 1950 : "*The Criterion*, even when it consisted of 200 pages (and however dull some of the pages may have been) was always a little magazine – not only because it was not self-supporting, but because it lived and died under one editor" (7.473).

4. TSE wrote in a letter to Delmore Schwartz of 26 Oct 1939: "It was certainly my policy by and large not to bother about publishing poets once their names were made, but to publish stuff by men who needed a chance to establish themselves" (Beinecke).

Prefatory Note to *James Joyce. Sa vie, son œuvre, son rayonnement*

Paris: Librairie La Hune, 1949. Pp. [126]; Prefatory note, [10-11].[1]

Un des privilèges les plus insignes du génie est de se dépasser sans cesse en se complétant. Il sied que l'étendue de l'œuvre réponde à cette puissance inhérente à l'écrivain : les œuvres qui jalonnent son parcours doivent chacune à leur tour suffire sans plus à chaque étape de sa croissance. Du vivant de l'artiste, et pendant qu'il poursuit son travail, ce développement n'apparaît que comme une suite de changements, dont nous ne sommes pas toujours à même d'éprouver la nécessité. Nous jugeons cette évolution, selon les moyens dont nous disposons, en fonction de celle de ses œuvres qui nous avait paru la meilleure. Ainsi certains lecteurs de *Gens de Dublin* durent s'étonner de *Dedalus* ; il y eut certainement des admirateurs de *Dedalus* qui furent scandalisés par *Ulysse* ; et des fervents d'*Ulysse*, en plus grand nombre encore, n'auront vu en *Finnegans Wake* que lubie d'un génie en train de s'effondrer, qu'effort stérile de la part d'un homme qui avait déjà écrit son chef-d'œuvre, de trouver coûte que coûte un sujet nouveau et une manière autre de dire.[2] Mais il doit être évident à présent, qu'il est tout aussi vain de chercher à établir un ordre de mérite parmi les œuvres de Joyce que parmi celles de Shakespeare. Les écrits de Joyce forment un tout ; il n'est guère plus possible d'écarter ses œuvres de jeunesse, sous prétexte de n'y voir que des étapes, sans intérêt en elles-mêmes, de son cheminement vers celles de sa maturité, que de répudier ces dernières comme le fruit de la décadence. De même que chez Shakespeare, les dernières œuvres s'expliquent par les premières, celles du début par celles de la fin. Car c'est tout le voyage, et non pas l'une ou l'autre de ses étapes, qui lui assure une place parmi les illustres.[3]

T. S. ELIOT

Jour de la Nativité de la Très Sainte Vierge, 1949.[4]

PUBLISHED ORIGINAL TEXT[1]

One of the greatest capacities of genius is the power of development. The volume of a man's work should correspond to this capacity in him: what he leaves behind should be no more and no less than what is needed to

realise each definite stage of his development. While an artist is still living and working, we see his development rather as change. According to our own capacities, we see this change as for the better or for the worse, in relation to that one of his works which we elect as "the best." Thus, there may have been readers of *Dubliners* who regarded the *Portrait* as an aberration; there were certainly admirers of the *Portrait* who deplored *Ulysses*; there were still more admirers of *Ulysses* who viewed *Finnegans Wake* as the raving of genius in decay, or as the futile effort of a man who had achieved his masterpiece, to find something new to say and a new way of saying it.[2] But now at last, I think, the question "which was Joyce's greatest work?" should appear as pointless as the question "which is Shakespeare's greatest play?" Joyce's writings form a whole; we can neither reject the early work as stages, of no intrinsic interest, of his progress towards the latter, nor reject the later work as the outcome of decline. As with Shakespeare, his later work must be understood through the earlier, and the first through the last; it is the whole journey, not any one stage of it, that assures him his place among the great.[3]

Nativity of the *B. V. M.*: 1949.[4]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. This note was printed in Oct 1949 in a catalog produced for an exhibition of Joyce's work that was held in Oct/Nov 1949 at La Hune, a Paris bookshop. The note appeared in French translation on the verso of the fifth leaf and in English with TSE's facsimile signature on the recto of the sixth leaf. TSE sent it to Maria Jolas on 8 Sept, saying: "I am so sorry for the delay, but I was immersed in the production of my play in Edinburgh; and after my return I was completely exhausted and idle. In hope this is not too late; and that it is not unsuitable. In either case, scrap it. I hope the sale will be most successful and bring in lots of money" (Beinecke).

On 13 June 1950, TSE opened a similar exhibition in London, "James Joyce: His Life and Work," which ran from 14 June to 12 July 1950 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, and this prefatory note, together with "The Approach to James Joyce" (1943), was reprinted in the catalog of that exhibition, *James Joyce 1882-1941*. TSE wrote to Herbert Read on 15 May 1950: "I suppose that I ought to accept, and open the Joyce exhibition. I am relieved to know that a few, simple sentences will suffice. I am afraid I have not any personal items worth including" (Victoria).

2. In "The Approach to James Joyce," TSE described the novel as "at least as great a work as *Ulysses*, and that is a great book indeed" (6.430). In a letter to Desmond MacCarthy of 14 Nov 1947, however, TSE confessed not to have read the whole of *Finnegans Wake* (King's). In *The Frontiers of Criticism* (1956), he later defined it as a "monstrous masterpiece" and commented: "Perhaps Joyce did not realize how obscure his book is" (8.126). He further expressed reservations about the work in another letter to Jack P. Dalton of 26 Sept 1963: "It is true that I was responsible for the publication of FINNEGANS WAKE but I never felt any warm enthusiasm for the

work. . . . No one admires Joyce more than I do – but all one can say is that after *Ulysses* there was nothing else for him to do" (*James Joyce Quarterly*, 6, Fall 1968, 81).

3. In his obituary note "A Message to the Fish" (1941), TSE defined Joyce as "the greatest man of letters of my generation" (6.159). In his conclusion to "The Approach to James Joyce," he gave the following advice to readers of his work: "Don't try to read *Finnegans Wake* until you have read *Ulysses*; don't read *Ulysses* until you find you enjoy the *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; and read *Dubliners* first of all. That is the only possible way of coming to understand the work of one of the great writers, not of our own time only, but of all European literature" (6.430).

4. 8 Sept 1949

Remarks in German to German audiences

On his German tour from 27 Oct to 19 Nov 1949, TSE gave lectures and a few readings in Hamburg, Berlin, Hanover, Göttingen, Münster, Bonn, and Cologne, all sponsored by the German Foreign Office in London. The last two cities visited, Heidelberg and Munich, were in the American Zone, where the lectures were arranged by American authorities through Amerika-Haus. In addition to the three lectures offered by TSE – "The Aims of Poetic Drama" ["Die Aufgaben des Versdramas"], "The Idea of a European Society" ["Die Idee einer europäischen Gesellschaft"], and "The Development of Shakespeare's Verse" ["Shakespeares Verskunst"] – several universities requested discussions of education, culture, religion, and contemporary poetry. As TSE, who lectured in English, requested that there be no tiring question/answer sessions after the lectures, he prepared the following position texts, translated anonymously, to read out in German at lectures, lunches, and dinners, as appropriate.

1. EUROPÄISCHE UNIVERSITÄT[1]

Wenn Sie eine neue Universität für ganz Europa meinen, die irgendwo in Europa gegründet werden und einer Nation nicht mehr gehören soll als jeder anderen, dann kann ich Ihnen nur eine vorläufige Antwort geben, da ich noch nicht die Argumente kenne, die zu Gunsten einer solchen Universität sprechen. Meiner Meinung nach wäre der Nachteil einer solchen neuen Universität, dass sie nicht in einer bestimmten europäischen Kultur verwurzelt wäre. Eine Universität ist keine Maschinerie, sondern ein lebendes und sich entwickelndes Ganzes, und alles muss im eigenen Boden wachsen, der die Kraft zum Wachstum gibt. Auch die Entwicklungsgeschichte einer Universität ist wichtig, und die älteren Universitäten werden, solange sie ihr Niveau beibehalten, sich immer eines größeren Prestiges erfreuen als es neue Universitäten erlangen können. Das Wünschenswerte ist meiner Ansicht nach ein stärkeres Gefühl der Gemeinschaft zwischen den Universitäten der verschiedenen Länder und ein gegenseitiger Austausch von Lehrern und Schülern. Ich denke, dass neu gegründete Universitäten dazu neigen, ihrem Charakter nach zu national zu sein.

2. CHRISTLICHE GESELLSCHAFT

Ich bin der Ansicht, dass die Kultur jedes Volkes aus seiner Religion entsteht und dass ihre Entwicklung in erster Linie durch die Religion erfolgt.

Es ist offensichtlich, dass eine Kultur eine gewisse Zeit weiterbestehen und sogar einige ihrer glänzendsten Werke auf dem Gebiete der Kunst und sogar der Philosophie hervorbringen kann, nachdem Glaube und religiöse Gebräuche dahingeschwunden oder beinahe verloren gegangen sind. Ich denke jedoch, dass eine Gemeinschaft, die sich in dieser Lage befindet, von ihrem kulturellen Kapital zehrt und ihre Reserven erschöpft, und dass ihre Kultur schließlich herabsinkt. Ich glaube, dass die ganze europäische Kultur während der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts und noch mehr im 20. Jahrhundert auf diese Weise von ihrem Kapital gezehrt hat und dass nun die Gefahr einer Erschöpfung besteht. Darum sage ich, wenn wir nicht unser Christentum behaupten, dann werden wir keine neue Kultur haben, es sei denn, dass wir letzten Endes dazu kommen, den Glauben einer anderen Religion anzunehmen. Ich weiß nicht, welcher Art diese Religion sein könnte, aber es ist mir klar, dass es eine tiefer stehende Religion sein würde.

3. ZEITGENÖSSISCHE SCHRIFTSTELLER

Meine Ansicht ist folgende: Unsere zeitgenössische Kunst muss aus der Kunst unserer Vergangenheit wachsen. Ich möchte hier nur von der Dichtkunst sprechen. Es ist sowohl für die Dichter als auch für die Leser von heute nötig, die Werke der Vergangenheit zu kennen, vor allem natürlich die ihrer eigenen Sprache, um neue Werke schreiben und die neue Dichtkunst entsprechend würdigen zu können. – Andrerseits bin ich der Meinung, dass, wenn ein Volk aufhört Gedichte zu schreiben, es auch nicht mehr imstande sein kann, sein eigenes literarisches Erbe zu würdigen. Wenn wir aufhören Gedichte zu schreiben, dann wird die Dichtung der Vergangenheit allmählich die Dichtung einer toten Sprache werden und wird keine lebendige Beziehung mehr zu uns haben, denn die Sprache ändert sich ständig. Das Werkzeug des Dichters ist vor allem die lebende Sprache, die er selbst spricht und hört, und nicht die Sprache seines Vaters oder seines Großvaters. Wir brauchen immer neue Dichter, denn wir brauchen immer Männer, die die Sprache, wie wir sie selbst sprechen, und das Leben, wie wir es selbst leben, in Poesie umformen.

TRANSLATION

1. EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY[1]

If you mean a new university for the whole of Europe, which is founded somewhere in Europe and should not belong to one nation more than any

other, then I can give you only a provisional answer, because I am not yet familiar with the arguments that speak in favor of such a university. In my opinion, the disadvantage of such a new university would be that it would not be rooted in a specific European culture. A university is not a piece of machinery, but rather a living and developing whole, and everything must grow in its own soil that provides the power for growth. A university's development history is also important, and the older universities, as long as they maintain their quality, will always enjoy a greater prestige than the new universities can attain. What is desirable, in my opinion, is a stronger feeling of community between the universities of different countries, and a mutual exchange of teachers and students. I think that newly founded universities tend to be too nationalistic in character.

2. CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

I am of the opinion that the culture of every people arises from their religion, and that its [the culture's] development comes primarily from religion. It is obvious that a culture can continue to exist for a certain time, and can even produce some of its most brilliant works of art and even philosophy, after belief and religious practices have dwindled or have been nearly lost. However, I think that a community which finds itself in this situation lives off its cultural capital and exhausts its reserves, and that in the end, its culture declines. I believe that during the second half of the 19th century and even more in the 20th century, the entire European culture lived off its capital in this way, and that now a danger of exhaustion exists. Because of this, I say that if we do not maintain our Christianity, then we will not have any new culture, unless we eventually end up adopting the belief of another religion. I do not know what kind of religion this might be, but it is clear to me that it would be an inferior religion.

3. CONTEMPORARY WRITERS

My opinion is as follows: our contemporary art must grow out of the art of our past. I would only like to speak here of the art of poetry. It is necessary for the poets as well as for the readers of today to be familiar with the works of the past, above all those of their own language, of course, in order to be able to write new works and show suitable appreciation for the new poetry. On the other hand, I am of the opinion that when a people cease to write poems, they are no longer capable of appreciating their own literary heritage. When we stop writing poems, then the poetry of the past will gradually

become the poetry of a dead language, and will no longer have any living relationship to us, because language changes constantly. The poet's tool is, above all, the living language that he speaks and hears himself, and not the language of his father or his grandfather. We always need new poets, because we always need men who transform into poetry the language that we ourselves speak, and the life that we ourselves live.

NOTE

1. This topic may have been prompted by TSE's discussion of universities in *Die Einheit der europäischen Kultur*, broadcast on the BBC German Service in Mar 1946: "No university ought to be merely a national institution, even if it is supported by the nation. The universities of Europe should have their common ideals, they should have their obligations towards each other. They should be independent of the governments of the countries in which they are situated" (6.719).

TEXTUAL NOTE

The undated two-page typescript CC of the German text is in the Houghton: bMS Am 1691 (51).

The Aims of Poetic Drama[1]

ADAM International Review, 17 (Nov 1949) 10-16

I am setting out to ask the question: "Why should anyone want to write a play in verse, instead of in prose?" This is not nearly so simple a question as it sounds. You are probably either people who like poetry, and therefore think it needs no justification; or you are people who like the theatre and see no need for poetry there at all. In fact, I hope that there are some persons who do not like poetry. For I want to show that poetry is a proper form for the theatre, in fact that it is the normal form, whether you think you like poetry or not.

For a long time now, prose dialogue has dominated the theatre. We are still under the influence of Ibsen – the prose Ibsen – and are reluctant to admit that Ibsen was really a poet who wrote nearly all of his plays in prose. It seems to be generally accepted, that verse is a form that the theatre has outgrown; that it is all very well for fairy stories, or for historical plays set in a remote past; but that modern problems and modern emotions can only be expressed in prose. Poetry, in fact, is not taken seriously by theatre-goers, unless it is Shakespeare, or Schiller, or Racine, or someone who has been dead a long time. And yet, on the other hand, it has always seemed to me that the great modern dramatists, such as Ibsen, Strindberg and even Tchekov, were really poets who were actually hampered by the limitations of prose. And on the other hand, I must render homage to these poets who, in our time, have made experiments with the theatre. I think especially of William Butler Yeats and Hugo von Hofmannsthal. These were poets who were also dramatists; who kept alive, in a period given over to prose theatre, the ancient traditional relationship between poetry and the stage. And the last fifteen years have seen, in England at least, a number of younger poets experimenting in the theatre: Auden, MacNeice, Spender; and more recently a younger generation than these; such poets as Ronald Duncan, Norman Nicholson, Anne Ridler, Christopher Fry.[2] The domination of Shakespeare over all other English poets, and perhaps the nature of the language itself, have tended always to direct the minds of English poets to the stage. But I think that the work of still another generation will be needed – if for another generation the opportunities are still open – before poetry can

hope to be established on our popular stage as it was three hundred and more years ago.

It is about the problem at the present time that I am going to write. I want to try to make clear, first, what I think the verse drama should endeavour to do, the aims it should set and the directions it should take, if it is to justify itself again for the ordinary theatre audience; and second, I want to try to give some reasons for thinking that verse in the theatre has greater resources than prose. My illustrations will, I fear, be drawn chiefly from my own experience. I do not do this from vanity, but because I understand my own aims, and my own partial success and failure, better than I do those of other contemporaries; and because the evolution of my own work illustrates best the general conclusions that I shall draw.

My first verse play, then, *Murder in the Cathedral*, did not greatly exceed the limits usually assigned to modern poetic drama. In the first place it was a religious play, and in the second place it dealt with historical events, well known to everyone of my first audiences, which took place nearly eight hundred years ago. For religious and historical subjects, poetry has always been tolerated on the stage. For, if poetry is not taken very seriously by the ordinary theatre-goer and the ordinary dramatic critic, neither is religion nor history; and the sort of audience assembled to see a religious and historical play is prepared to accept poetry as a suitable medium. But a religious historical play presents for the poet a special problem of language. The words and idioms you employ must not be exactly those of modern conversation, because you have to transport your audience into a period in the past; and they must not be conspicuously archaic, for you want to make your characters and their situation as real as if the events had taken place yesterday. The style must therefore be *neutral*, and it must suggest both the present and the past. The verse in this play of mine is given a formal character, by being sometimes rhymed and sometimes alliterative; and the use of a somewhat broken rhythm gives the suggestion of a poetry earlier than that of Shakespeare. The listener is reminded, I hope, of the almost mediaeval play *Everyman*, and of such verse as that of *Piers Plowman* in the fourteenth century.[3] Happily, there could be no question of reproducing the language of the twelfth century, in which the action takes place: that language would be completely unintelligible to an English audience today. Therefore I took the liberty, in writing the prose sermon which occurs in the middle, of using a style based upon that of English sermons of the early seventeenth century, but purified of all archaic and outmoded words and phrases.

Here, in *Murder in the Cathedral*, I was confronted in a special form with the problem which every verse dramatist writing in English must face – a problem which, in some form, confronts the modern verse dramatist writing in any language with a long literary tradition. The English problem is that of escaping from the verse of Shakespeare. And it is not merely Shakespeare, but the "blank verse," the unrhymed iambic tetrameter which has been the norm of English verse. Every English poet, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who has tried to write a verse play, has used this metre. They have been unable to escape echoes of the Shakespearean verse; and what is more, have been unable to escape echoes of all the *non*-dramatic poetry which has been written in this metre. Hence their language never sounds quite like *conversation* – and to suggest conversation, you must suggest the conversation of your own age, not that of some great predecessor generations ago.

Well, at least I was not imitating Shakespeare; and I was not writing verse of the same kind as my own lyric poems: but it struck me that I was using a verse which would serve my purpose for this one play and subject, and for no other. I had two reasons for believing that I had not solved any general problem. One is, I had depended greatly upon the use of a chorus. There were two peculiar justifications for this. One was that the essential action of that play – both the historical facts and the matter which I invented – was somewhat narrow. I did not want to increase the number of characters, I did not want to write an historical chronicle of twelfth-century politics; I wanted to concentrate on the death and martyrdom. The introduction of a chorus of excited women, reflecting by their own emotion the significance of the main action, helped wonderfully. The other motive was this: it is easier for a poet to write choral verse than to write dramatic dialogue. It is more like the kind of writing which he has already mastered; and the use of a chorus strengthens the power, and conceals the weaknesses, of his theatrical technique. For this reason I decided that I should not master verse drama until I had shown that I could write a good verse play without a chorus.

There were then three problems which I felt were left unsolved after *Murder in the Cathedral*. The first was that of a form of verse, and a choice of language, adaptable to any subject I might choose to write about. The second was that of writing a verse play without the use of lyrical poetry. And the third was this: that I wanted to find out whether I could dispense with the use of prose altogether. Now the two prose passages in *Murder in the Cathedral* could not have been written in verse. With the kind of versification that I used in that play, the audience would have been aware that it

was verse they were listening to. A sermon in the form of a poem is too unusual an experience for even the most regular church-goer; the illusion of the sermon would have been broken. And in the speeches of my knights, who are wholly aware that they are addressing an audience of people living 800 years after they are dead, the use of modern platform prose has its special effect: it is intended to *shock* the audience out of their complacency. But this is a kind of trick: a special device of no general utility – good for that one play only. It would be too long an excursion to go into the reasons why I think Shakespeare could afford to write scenes in prose, and we today cannot: suffice it to say that I think the modern verse play can only justify itself when it can show that *everything* can be said in verse.

I do not wish to give you the impression that I wish to rule out of dramatic poetry these three things: historical or mythological subject matter; the chorus; and the traditional dramatic verse forms of Western Europe. I do not wish to appear to lay down a law that the only suitable characters and situations are those of modern life; or that a verse play should consist of dialogue only; or that a wholly new form of versification is necessary. I can only legislate for myself; and I am only marking out what I see to be the only possible road for myself. If the poetic drama is to re-conquer its place, it must show that it can do just those things that are supposed to be done better in prose. As for the historical play, audiences are prepared to accept poetry from personages dressed in the robes of some remote period; they need to learn to accept poetry on the lips of people in modern dress, living in modern houses and flats, and using telephones and motor-cars. Audiences are prepared to accept poetry recited by a chorus, for this again is remote from modern life. For the modern audience, this is not drama but poetry. And finally, audiences expect poetry to be in rhythms made familiar by their classic authors; and these rhythms have lost touch with the development of speech. What we have to do is to bring poetry into the world in which the audience lives, and to which it returns when it leaves the theatre; not to transport the audience into some unreal world, totally unlike their own, in which poetry can be spoken.

What I should like to do – or rather, what I should like to be done, by another generation of dramatists who will, I hope, have the benefit of our experimentation – is this: that the people on the stage should seem to the audience so like themselves that they would find themselves thinking: "*I* could talk in poetry too!" Then they are not transported into an unaccustomed, artificial world; but their ordinary, sordid, dreary world is suddenly

illuminated and transfigured. And if poetry cannot do that for people, then it is merely a superfluous decoration. What poetry should do in the theatre is a kind of humble shadow or analogy of the Incarnation, whereby the human is taken up into the divine.

I was determined, therefore, to take for my next play a theme of contemporary life, with characters of our own time living in our own world and wearing the same sort of clothes that we wear. In *The Family Reunion* my chief preoccupation was to work out a form of verse as close as possible to modern conversation, and a form in which the most commonplace necessary remarks can be made without sounding absurd, and in which the most poetical language can be employed without its seeming affected. I think that I did make some progress in this direction. There is no prose in this play except a brief quotation from a newspaper. I dispensed with the formal chorus, and replaced it with choral passages spoken by one or more of the actors who take part in the ordinary dialogue and who have also individual parts in the play. Now, while I confess that I still like some of these choral passages as *poetry*, I felt that the poetry was a little too obvious; and that some passages were like an aria in Italian opera, where the action is halted in order that the audience may enjoy a lyrical interlude. In *The Family Reunion* I was still employing poetic props which were not dramatic; and for the drama itself, I was depending too much upon the literary association with Aeschylus.[4] And I saw that in my next play I wanted to avoid any overt reference to the framework of classical drama – and to avoid poetry for the poetry's sake.

For my ambition was, and is, to write a play in verse without the audience having to put itself in a special frame of mind to listen to poetry. I wanted to write a play in which the audience should be affected, unconsciously, by the rhythm of the verse, without being consciously aware that it was verse they are hearing. I wanted the audience to be aware of the poetry only at intense moments; and I wanted them to feel, at such moments, not that they were listening to lines of poetry by T. S. Eliot, but that the dramatic situation had reached such a point of intensity that it was *natural* for the characters to express themselves in poetry. Indeed, there are moments in the lives of most sensitive people when they feel that they could express what they feel better if they could find the words and the rhythms to say it in poetry. Whether, or how far, I have succeeded in my third play I cannot tell; I hope that you may some day have the opportunity – and want to take it – of judging for yourselves; but I think at least that you will be able to

judge better from knowing what I was trying to do. And I was pleased to find, recently, that several critics left the theatre without having decided whether the play was meant to be in verse or in prose. For I think the unconscious effect of verse on the audience is the most important part of its effect, and the best justification for its use.

Before going on to give my reasons for believing that poetry is the normal form for serious drama – and therefore neither a speciality for limited purposes, nor an anachronism – I should like to analyse briefly one scene from a great poetic drama. This scene is a good example because it is the first scene of its play, and therefore occurs before any of the moments of greatest poetic intensity; because it is not one of those scenes in which you would expect the poetic element to be most conspicuous; because it is, from purely dramatic standards, about as perfect an opening scene, in the way in which it sets the key for the play and arouses excited interest in the audience, as can be found in the whole of drama; and because it is the first scene of *Hamlet*.[5]

What we do not notice, when we witness this first scene of Hamlet in the theatre, is the astonishing variation of style in a scene in which nothing is superfluous. It is only after reading it to ourselves over and over again, that we begin to understand what has been done to us and by what means. The first twenty-two lines are built out of the simplest words and the most homely idiom. To reach the point at which he could write those twenty-two lines, Shakespeare had passed many years in writing for the stage. There is nothing quite so simplified and sure in his earlier work. It took him years to develop conversational, colloquial poetry beyond the monologue of the character part – a part such as that of the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, the part in which the homeliness of the speech makes its effect by contrast – into the quick dramatic dialogue. No poet has begun to master *dramatic* poetry until he can write lines of verse which are like these *transparent*: that is to say, you listen not to the poetry as poetry, but to the meaning of poetry. When you listen to the opening of *Hamlet*, you do not stop to notice whether the characters are speaking verse or prose. The verse makes its effect upon us, we have a different and fuller response than we should have to prose; but we are not at the moment aware of that – we are aware of a frosty night, of the officers keeping watch on the battlements of Elsinore, and of the foreboding of an ominous action. I do not say, mind you, that there is no place, in poetic drama, for the situation in which part of one's immediate enjoyment will be the enjoyment of hearing beautiful poetry – providing

that the author's dramatic skill is such that he persuades us that poetry is at such moments the inevitable form of speech. I only say that the true dramatic poet will be able to make us unaware of the difference between poetry and prose. It is most certain that at such moments the poet and the dramatist are one.

From the short, brusque ejaculations of the beginning, suitable to the situation and the character of the watchmen, but not expressing more character than is needed for the immediate purpose, the verse glides into a slower movement after the appearance of the aristocratic courtiers, Horatio and Marcellus . . .

Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy . . .[6]

and this movement changes again on the appearance of Royalty, the ghost of the King, to the solemn and sonorous

Who art thou, that usurp'st this time of night[7]

(note, by the way, the anticipation of the plot conveyed by the use of the verb *usurp*) and the suggestion of majesty, in an allusion skilfully reminding us *whose* ghost this is:

So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.[8]

There is an abrupt change of rhythm in Horatio's words to the ghost on its second appearance; this staccato movement is checked by the words

We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence . . .[9]

and the scene reaches a resolution with the speech of Marcellus

It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein Our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long . . .[10]

with Horatio's answer

So have I heard and do in part believe it.
But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill;
Break we our watch up . . .[11]

This is great poetry, and it is dramatic; but it is more than dramatic and poetic. There emerges, when we come to analyse it, a kind of musical pattern as well, which has checked and accelerated the pulse of our emotions without our knowing it. Note that in these last words of Marcellus there is a deliberate emergence of the poetical into consciousness. When we hear the lines

> But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
> Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill;

we are lifted for a moment beyond character, but with no sense of any unfitness in Horatio's being the speaker. The transitions in this scene obey laws which are musical as well as dramatic: laws of the music of poetic drama. And note that the two poetic lines of Horatio which I have quoted twice are prefaced by a line of the simplest colloquial speech which might be either verse or prose –

> So have I heard and do in part believe it.

and that he follows them abruptly with a phrase which is hardly more than a stage direction –

> Break we our watch up . . .

It would be interesting to pursue, by a similar kind of analysis, this question of what we may call the *double pattern* in a great poetic drama – or rather, of a single pattern which may be studied under the aspect of stagecraft and under the aspect of music. It could be shown, I think, that Shakespeare came to develop this musical pattern not only for the single scene, but for a whole play. But I think that the examination of this one scene is enough to show us that the poetry of a great verse drama is not merely a *decoration* of a dialogue which could, as drama, be as well put in prose; but that it makes the drama itself different – and more profoundly dramatic. It should show us also that the more important part of the effect of the poetry upon us, when we sit in a theatre and listen to such a play as *Hamlet* is what we are unconscious of. And last, that this effect does not operate only on those members of the audience who "like poetry," but upon those who do not. By the people who do not like poetry, I mean the people who cannot sit down with a book of poetry and enjoy reading it: these people also, when they listen to a poetic drama, should be affected by the poetry without knowing it. And these are the people whom the writer of poetic drama today needs to keep in mind.

So far, I have stressed two advantages of verse over prose: the exciting effect of verse rhythms operating on the mind of the listener without his being conscious of it, and the possibilities of reinforcing and deepening the dramatic effect by the musical effect of a varied pattern of style. These may still appear to you to be *additions* to drama, which intensify the effect but do not alter the effect. I wish to claim more than that. I would say that everything that prose can do in the theatre, verse can do also; but that there is a dramatic range possible to verse, greater than that open to prose. Consider, for example, the plays of Maeterlinck – they are written in prose, but are certainly what is considered "poetic"; and I should not deny their poetic qualities.[12] But in order to be poetic in prose, a dramatist must be much more consistently poetic than if he writes in verse. He must avoid realism, and in so doing sacrifice characterisation. And it is in recognising the identities and differences between characters on the stage and ourselves and the people we have known, that we get our serious impressions of a play, whether it be comedy or tragedy. The poetic drama in prose is in fact more limited by poetic convention, or by our conventional belief of what is suitable subject matter for poetry and what is the suitable way of dealing with it, than is the poetic drama in verse.

But as for the difference between drama in verse and drama in prose, I should say that the great difference was this. The poetic prose play must be too poetic; and usual prose play must be limited to the plane of ordinary consciousness. It can show us the world of our ordinary awareness from a particular point of view, and thus sharpen our perception of that world. It can show us more of that world, of the relations and conflicts between persons or types of person, than we see for ourselves while immersed in the ordinary business of living. The characters must, however, behave according to our ordinary understanding of types, as separate and self-contained individuals having the same kind of existence as that of which we are ordinarily aware. But beyond the verge of the nameable, classifiable emotions and motives of our usual conscious life, there is a fringe of indefinite extent, of feelings and emotions which we can only see, so to speak, out of the corner of the eye, or in moments of accidental detachment from action. This fringe is penetrated by dramatic poetry at its moments of greater intensity. In great dramatic poetry, a greater range of feeling can be expressed than in the greatest prose play. In a verse play, as in a prose play, the personages of the dramatist must be true to character, but they can also speak beyond character, and thereby open a window into worlds of which we are commonly

unaware. They can express in words feelings which otherwise can only be expressed by music.

When Macbeth utters his famous words beginning

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow[13]

or when Othello, suddenly confronted at night by his angry and involuntary father-in-law and his friends, speaks the beautiful line

Put up your bright swords or the dew will rust them[14]

we do not feel that Shakespeare has given them these lines simply because he has thought of beautiful lines and wishes to make use of them. We do not feel that they are *out* of character, but in some way *beyond* character. The line spoken by Macbeth reveals to us the weariness of the weak man forced by his half-hearted desires – and by the wife who has forced her own ambitions on him and then, by dying, left him without the motive to continue. The line of Othello expresses irony, dignity, and fearlessness. Incidentally, it reminds us of the time of night in which the scene takes place. But these lines, in expressing the men who speak them, are also beyond character in the ordinary sense. For a moment life is elevated to the dignity of dance or liturgy, with a gaiety which is in all great poetry, and the greater seriousness behind the gaiety. It is in fact the privilege of dramatic poetry to be able to show us several planes of reality at once.

We have been, for several generations in the theatre, under the dominance of the "drama of ideas." The dramatist may have a proposition, either simple or paradoxical; or he may wish to propound a problem for the audience to solve for themselves in their own way; or he may wish to exhibit human types in a typical situation. The audience, and the critics, demand an explanation: they ask, what is the *idea* that the dramatist has tried to illustrate? Thinking of Mallarmé's remark that poetry is made not with ideas but with words, I am tempted to suggest that drama is made not with ideas but with human beings.[15] An earnest critic, interviewing me after the first night of my latest play, said that he came to ask me what was the *meaning* of the play. I replied: "to illustrate the lesser in terms of the greatest, what do you suppose Shakespeare would have said if you had come to him, with your notebook and pencil, after the first night of *Hamlet* and asked him what the play meant?"[16] For in all poetry there should be more than the author himself is aware of: the question of what the author meant, or what a poem meant to the author when he was writing it, is itself a meaningless question. You

cannot say that a play like *Hamlet* or *King Lear* is the realisation of an *idea*. It is a function of such plays to *suggest* ideas to those who hear and read them; and they could not have this provocative power if the author had been concerned to impose an opinion, convey a doctrine, or influence conduct. The play may do all of these things. But the great play will affect different people differently; it will be capable of innumerable interpretations; and it will have a fresh meaning for every generation. We have only to glance at the history of literary criticism to see how inexhaustible is any great work of imagination. If, for instance, Shakespeare could read all the criticism and interpretation of his work, in every language, which has been written in the last three hundred years, do you think he could point to any one critic, or to any one sentence in that critic's writing, and say: "this man has understood me" or "this is what I meant"? He would simply be astonished and bewildered to discover the endless variety of meanings that his words have contained for different men and women, and for different generations; and would have to confess that he himself was unconscious of all these meanings. In the end he would say simply "I don't know"; and, to any interpreter: "possibly. You may be right."

That, I think indicates the difference between the permanent and the ephemeral in imaginative writing. In the latter, the author can know exactly what he meant, and if the audience does not get the thing that he was aware of meaning to say, his attempt has failed. And because he had a definite purpose, a thesis to demonstrate, what he has written will cease to interest and excite, as soon as the circumstances, in which he formulated that thesis, have changed. But in really creative writing, the author is making something which he does not understand himself. Only God understands the creature; in human creation humanity is only an instrument. Men and women do not necessarily understand their own children, merely because they have begotten and borne them; they have to try to learn to understand what they have created. If this is true of physical generation, why not of artistic creation also? That there are great works of imaginative prose which partake of this richness I do not deny; though I doubt, for instance, whether *Don Quixote* is as inexhaustible as *Faust*, or will be as living a thousand years hence. For poetry both imposes a form to which the author must submit himself, and releases more unconscious force, than prose can; and this in the end is, I think, the reason why only dramatic poetry can give us the full satisfaction that we ask of the theatre.

NOTES

1. A lecture delivered at the University of Hamburg on 28 Oct 1949 during TSE's three-week lecture tour of Germany. It was published in a German translation by Friedrich Podszus as "Die Aufgaben des Versdramas" in *Die neue Rundschau*, 61 (1950), [190]-203 (TS in King's P21A). TSE, who intended this lecture for a German audience, wrote to John E. Palmer, editor of the *Sewanee Review*, on 14 Sept 1949: "When I have finished this I will consider whether it seems suitable for English speaking readers and write to you again about it." An earlier version was delivered in Rome on 9 Dec 1947 as "Poetry in the Theatre" (7.70) and published after extensive revision as *Poetry and Drama* in 1951 (7.589).

"The Aims of Poetic Drama" differs completely from the address of the same title to the Poets' Theatre Guild, published in Aug 1949 (7.356).

2. In the 1930s, W. H. Auden wrote the verse drama *The Dance of Death* (1933) and plays in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood, such as *The Dog beneath the Skin* (1935) and *The Ascent of F6* (1937), both of which were published by Faber (see 5.406, n.10). Louis MacNiece had authored *Out of the Picture* (1937) and more recently the radio play *Christopher Columbus* (1944); Stephen Spender's first play, *Trial of a Judge* (1938), was produced by Rupert Doone's Group Theatre, in which Auden was also involved.

In 1945, E. Martin Browne, who directed *Murder in the Cathedral* in 1935, leased the Mercury Theatre in London and produced a series of religious plays with the Pilgrim Players. These included *This Way to the Tomb* by Ronald Duncan (1914-82), *The Old Man of the Mountains* by Norman Nicholson (1914-87), *The Shadow Factory: A Nativity Play* by Anne Ridler, as well as the comedy *A Phoenix Too Frequent* (1946) by Christopher Fry (1907-2005). On 3 July 1945, TSE wrote to Ridler that he was having "discussions with Martin Browne and Ashley Dukes about the control of dramatic rights in your play and those of Duncan and Nicholson. Faber & Faber do not feel that they wish to relinquish all share in production royalties of these plays." The three verse dramas were later published by Faber.

3. The anonymous *Everyman*, which TSE taught in his 1918 Extension course (1.754), is an allegorical morality play first printed in the early sixteenth century. *Piers Plowman* (ca. 1395) is a satire of ecclesiastical corruption by William Langland composed in alliterative verse.

4. In *The Family Reunion* (1939), TSE drew on Aeschylus's trilogy the *Oresteia* in his use of three of Aeschylus's dramatic figures: the chorus, the Eumenides, and Orestes.

5. As TSE explains in his "Note to 'Poetry and Drama'" (7.603), the analysis of the first scene of *Hamlet* is revised from the 1937 lecture "The Development of Shakespeare's Verse. Two Lectures" (5.546-48).

6. I.i.23 (Marcellus to Horatio and Bernardo)

7. l. 46 (Horatio to Ghost)

8. ll. 62-63 (Horatio to Marcellus)

9. ll. 143-44 (Marcellus to Horatio and Bernardo)

10. ll. 157-60 (Marcellus to Horatio and Bernardo)

11. ll. 165-68 (Horatio to Marcellus and Bernardo)

12. In "'Rhetoric' and Poetic Drama" (1919), TSE was more critical of the poetic qualities of Maeterlinck, "whose drama, in failing to be dramatic, fails also to be poetic. Maeterlinck has a literary perception of the dramatic and a literary perception of the poetic, and he joins the two; the two are not, as sometimes they are in the work of Rostand, fused" (2.86).

13. V.v.19 (Macbeth to Seyton)

14. I.ii.59 (Othello to Iago, Roderigo, and Brabantio); *read*: "Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them"

15. In "Poésie et pensée abstraite" (1939), which TSE quoted several times in the 1940s and 1950s, Paul Valéry recounted an exchange reported to him by Edgar Degas. During a conversation with Mallarmé, the painter complained about the difficulty of writing verse, saying that he had many ideas but that he could not do anything with them. Mallarmé replied: "Ce n'est point avec des idées, mon cher Degas, que l'on fait des vers. C'est avec des *mots*" (*Variété V*, Paris: Gallimard, 1944, 141). *Trans*: It is not with ideas, my dear Degas, that one makes verses. It is with *words*.

The title of TSE's "A Commentary: That Poetry Is Made with Words" (1939) is an allusion to Mallarmé's remark (5.668).

16. *The Cocktail Party* premiered in Edinburgh on 22 Aug 1949. In an interview, Iain Hamilton asked TSE: "In the light of your latest work, a comedy, would you care to give a definition of Comedy which seems to you precise for our time and place?" TSE replied: "Instead of answering the question, I should like to suggest to you a useful exercise. Imagine that you have just seen the first performance of *Hamlet*, and try to set down fourteen questions for Shakespeare to answer, parallel to these fourteen. Then consider whether it is not all for the best that Shakespeare never answered these questions, or if he did, that the answers have not been preserved." "Comments on . . . The Cocktail Party . . . The Author Explains," *World Review*, New Ser. 9, Nov 1949, 22.

Die Idee einer europäischen Gesellschaft[1]

Hamburger akademische Rundschau, 3 (1950) 727-38

Ich beabsichtige in diesem Vortrag, einige der Gedanken zusammenzustellen, die in zwei kleinen Büchern zu finden sind, nämlich in *Die Idee einer christlichen Gesellschaft*, 1939 von mir veröffentlicht, und in *Beiträge zum Begriff der Kultur*, die ich gerade vor einem Jahr herausgebracht habe. Jeder, der diese beiden Essays gelesen hat, wird mit den folgenden Gedanken vertraut sein. Trotzdem hoffe ich, dass die hier gebotene Auswahl und Zusammenstellung sie in einem neuen Licht zeigen werden.

Die verwirrende Vielschichtigkeit der politischen, ökonomischen und technischen Probleme der letzten Jahre hat das Denken der Menschen, selbst derer, die solchen Problemen nachzudenken gewohnt sind, auf Pläne zur Vereinigung der Nationen gewiesen. Die solche Pläne unterbreiten, haben die Wissenschaft von Politik, Wirtschaft und Industrie gründlich studiert. Ich beabsichtige nicht, mich mit Sachverständigen auf eine Stufe zu stellen oder ihre Vorschläge zu kritisieren.

Nicht politische, ökonomische oder wissenschaftliche Vereinigungspläne, das Problem einer Einheit der Kultur ist mein Anliegen, besonders einer Einheit der europäischen Kultur. Und obgleich dies die Betrachtung von Problemen einschließen wird, zu deren Lösung wir unmittelbar nicht beitragen können, und obgleich die Monat für Monat und Jahr für Jahr zu bewältigenden Probleme des Überlebens hierdurch nicht gelöst werden, glaube ich dennoch, es habe einen sehr praktischen Nutzen, über diese Dinge nachzudenken. Denn auf eine Gemeinschaft von Menschen, die sich nur auf Furcht stützt – Furcht vor Krieg, vor Hunger, vor Chaos –, ist kein Verlass. Und selbst gefühlsmäßige Einheit aus Sympathie ist weniger verlässlich als jene, die auf dem beruht, was uns allen gemeinsam ist, auf dem, worin wir uns gleichen. Gibt es eine organische Beziehung zwischen den Teilen Europas? Wenn es sie gibt, so sollte man sie bei der organisatorischen Vereinigung der Teile Europas berücksichtigen; denn sie ist die fundamentale Realität, mit der unsere Planer rechnen müssen, wie auch derer Bemühungen letzte Rechtfertigung. Wir müssen fühlen, dass die Verwirklichung Europas etwas Gutes in sich ist, und, da gut in sich, auch gut für die übrige Welt. Es muss ein Europa sein, das nicht nur sich selbst zu

erhalten fähig ist, sondern indem es sich erhält, die Menschheit im Allgemeinen fördert.

Hier muss ich eine scheinbare Abschweifung machen. Es gibt eine ganze Reihe gegensätzlicher Begriffspaare; bei ihrer Verwendung neigen wir zuweilen zu der Annahme, dass die konkreten Tatbestände, auf die sie sich beziehen, gleichfalls einander ausschließen. So setzen wir etwa Wachstum und Konstruktion, Mechanismus und Organismus, das Geplante und das Spontane, das Bewusste und das Unbewusste einander entgegen. Jedes Ding etwa scheint uns eine Maschine oder ein Organismus, entweder absichtsvoll oder spontan, bewusst oder unbewusst. In konkreten Situationen aber finden wir Elemente von beiden. Ich möchte das aus eigener Erfahrung illustrieren. Wenn ich ein Gedicht von einiger Länge schreibe, ein Gedicht, das Arbeit erfordert, dann finde ich rückblickend, dass ich im Endergebnis nicht mehr genau das Berechnete vom Spontanen, das Bewusste vom Unbewussten, das Gewachsene vom Konstruierten scheiden kann. Ich weiß, dass das Unerwartete sich ereignet, und ich weiß auch, dass ich manche Stunde bewusster Bemühung darangegeben habe. Vielleicht gehe ich lediglich von der Wahrnehmung aus, dass in mir ein Gefühls- und Gedankenkomplex sei, den ich irgendwie in Worte fassen muss, einfach darum, weil ich mich beunruhigt fühle, solange dieser Embryo nicht zur Welt gebracht ist. Aber der wirkliche Vorgang der Geburt schließt ein gut Teil wohlüberlegter Wortsuche ein, und im Gange dieser bewussten Arbeit kann es vorkommen, dass sich die Züge des ungeborenen Kindes bis zu völliger Fremdheit verändern.[2] Anderseits kann ich ausgehen von einer Art abstraktem Rahmen und Gerüst; aber indem ich diesem Gerüst einen Körper gebe, fließen mir Worte, Wendungen und Empfindungen zu, die ihrerseits das Gerüst in sich verändern. Ich schreibe ein Gedicht, weil ich in mir ein Gedicht spüre, das geschrieben werden will; aber ich habe auch mehrere Gedichte geschrieben, einfach weil mein Verleger von mir ein neues Gedicht aus besonderem Anlass wünschte. Ein paar Gedichte habe ich, von einem unwiderstehlichen Impuls getrieben, zu einem Zeitpunkt heruntergeschrieben, als ich eigentlich etwas anderes hätte tun sollen. Einige meiner Verse, wie die Chöre in *The Rock* und das Ganze von *Murder in the Cathedral*, wurden geschrieben, weil ich jegliche Gelegenheit ergreifen wollte, für das Theater zu schreiben. *Murder in the Cathedral* ist für ein Festspiel im Dom zu Canterbury geschrieben. Ich hatte mich hingesetzt und darüber nachgedacht, welcher Stoff wohl geeignet sein möchte. Natürlich dachte ich an den Mord am Erzbischof Becket. Ich las Tennysons Stück, das diesen Stoff

behandelt, und fand es der Mühe wert, etwas Besseres zu schreiben.[3] Ob es mir gelang, ist Ansichtssache. Ich habe aber, so viel steht fest, bei jedem Gedicht gefunden, dass die Planung das Wachstum lenkt und dass das Wachstum die nächste Stufe der Planung anzeigt. Nachher kann ich nicht sagen, und ich glaube nicht, dass es irgend jemand kann, was auf Inspiration und was auf Kalkulation beruht. Beide sind in einem Kunstwerk nicht voneinander zu trennen. Deshalb neige ich zu der Ansicht, dass der Baumeister des Sozialen, der Planer, einiges Gefühl für die Natur des von ihm bearbeiteten Materials braucht, und dass alle, die ein solches Gefühl für das Material haben, wohl imstande sein möchten, den Planer auf Fehler in seinem Entwurf aufmerksam zu machen und ihn daran zu erinnern, dass der Plan vom Material mitgestaltet sein muss, wie andererseits das Material von den Auswirkungen des Planes verwandelt wird.

Ich habe den Vorgang des Dichtens lediglich zur Illustration meiner Behauptung herausgegriffen, dass es eine Anzahl begrifflicher Gegensätze gibt, wie Kalkulation und Spontaneität, denen die Praxis des menschlichen Lebens nicht genau entspricht. So können wir sagen, dass das, was wir die Kultur einer Gesellschaft nennen, ein Ganzes ist, nicht bloß Summe, sondern Integration einer Vielfalt von Tätigkeiten, eine Totalität, die nicht geplant ist noch geplant werden kann. Doch gibt es ein gut Teil Planung in den einzelnen Aktivitäten, die wiederum die ganze Kultur beeinflussen. Ebenso können wir sagen, die Gesellschaft sei keine Maschine, sondern ein Organismus; nur liegt es eben in der Natur dieses Organismus, Maschinen zu erfinden und sich ihrer zu bedienen – ein Beispiel ist die Regierungsmaschine –, und die Maschinen, die der Organismus ausbildet, beeinflussen wiederum seinen Charakter.

Die Gefahr, der der Baumeister des Sozialen nie ganz entgeht – jener geistige Typ, der eine Gesellschaft zu planen versucht –, liegt darin, dass er die Natur des menschlichen Materials übersieht oder verkennt, oder dass er versucht, das menschliche Material zu verändern, um es der idealen Maschine anzupassen, wenn diese sich für das menschliche Material als nicht geeignet zu erweisen scheint. Das war in der Vergangenheit der Fall bei Kolonialregierungen, wenn das herrschende Volk, oft mit den lobenswertesten Absichten, versuchte, Systeme der Regierung, der Rechtsprechung und Erziehung einzuführen, die dem zu beherrschenden und in der Selbstverwaltung zu erziehenden Volk nicht gemäß waren. Wir sind alle geneigt zu glauben, dass das, was das beste für uns ist, auch das beste für jedermann sein müsse; weil wir unsere Regierungs-, Justiz- und Erziehungssysteme

für Maschinen halten, die exportiert werden können und deren Anwendung jeder erlernen kann, während sie doch nicht irgendwelche Maschinen sind, sondern bestimmte, von einem bestimmten gesellschaftlichen Organismus für eigene Bedürfnisse entwickelte.

In jedem Schema einer übernationalen Organisation der Welt im Allgemeinen oder Europas im Besonderen lauern zwei Irrtümer: Der eine liegt in der Annahme, dass die der Berechnung zugrunde liegende Einheit das Individuum sei, der andere darin, dass es die Nation sei, so wie sie heute existiert. Die zweite Annahme misst der Nation zu viel, die erste zu wenig Bedeutung zu. Eine europäische Gesellschaft, die nur ein Bund von Nationen wäre, wäre keine wirkliche Gesellschaft, weil sie keine organische Ganzheit mit persönlichen Zügen bilden würde: Sie würde den einzelnen nicht stolzer darauf machen, Europäer zu sein, als lediglich Deutscher, Franzose oder was immer er heute ist. Ein Europa, bestehend aus einer Masse von Individuen, die sich nichts anderem gegenüber zur Loyalität verpflichtet fühlten als nur Europa, wäre eine bloße Maschine. Wir können unsere Loyalität gegenüber der Nation nicht unterdrücken oder ersetzen, denn die Nation ist mehr als eine Anzahl von Menschen, die die gleiche Sprache sprechen und anderen Nationen das Nachsehen geben möchten. Die Nation ist eine kulturelle Einheit. Aber sie ist nicht die einzige kulturelle Einheit.

Ich sage, dass, vom Standpunkt der Kultur aus betrachtet, die Nation nur Anspruch hat auf eine innerhalb einer Anzahl von verschiedenen Stufen und Arten der Loyalität. Nehmen wir uns die Stufen zuerst vor. Ich glaube, eine der Bedingungen für die Einheit, die wir europäische Kultur zu nennen berechtigt wären, bestünde darin, dass die Unterschiedlichkeiten und Eigenheiten innerhalb jeder einzelnen Nation bejaht werden. Ich denke zuerst an die regionalen Unterschiedlichkeiten. Meine Grundeinheit der Kultur ist nicht das Individuum, sondern die Familie. So gibt es also zunächst eine Kultur der Familie, darüber hinaus eine von Familiengruppen, d. h. im Dorf, im Bezirk, innerhalb dessen die Menschen untereinander heiraten. Dann der Bezirk, in dem es gleiche Sprache, gleiche Sitten und die gleiche Küche gibt. Die Tendenz unseres Zeitalters zielt darauf ab, die lokalen Unterschiede auszulöschen. Wenn ich dagegen etwas einzuwenden habe, bin ich keineswegs von irgendwelchen antiquarischen Sentiments beeinflusst. Ich rede nicht der Konservierung uralter lokaler Sitten und Gebräuche, Kleidung und Sprache, Fähigkeiten und Handfertigkeiten das Wort. Denn Leben ist Veränderung, kleine Gebiete müssen sich ebenso umstellen wie große. Aber jeder Bezirk, jede Stadt und jedes Dorf sollten im Wechsel die

Identität bewahren; ich kann nicht zugeben, dass Veränderung und Fortschritt notwendigerweise einen Bodengewinn für die Uniformität bedeuten.

Wahrscheinlich hat niemals eine Nation vollkommenes Gleichgewicht und Harmonie zwischen den Teilen und dem Ganzen erreicht, und wohin wir einzig zu gelangen hoffen können, ist, dass jede Tendenz sich bemerkbar macht, wenn die entgegengesetzte übers Ziel hinausgeschossen ist, so dass also separatistische und regionalistische Kräfte in Erscheinung treten, sobald sich die Nation auf eine monotone Gleichförmigkeit zu entwickelt und zu übersteigerter Zentralisation der Kultur in der Hauptstadt neigt, dass anderseits Einheitstendenzen auftreten, wenn sich die Teile zum Schaden des Ganzen allzu hartnäckig behaupten. Wie dem auch sei, ich finde in Verschiedenartigkeit und Einheitlichkeit einer Nation, deren Kultur gesund ist, eine Art Muster für die größere Einheit, welche Europa heißt. Die lokalen Kulturen einer Nation sollten zur nationalen Kultur beitragen und umgekehrt durch sie genährt werden; und ebenso sollte es sein, und war bis zu einem gewissen Grade auch so, zwischen Europa und seinen verschiedenen Nationen. Heute besteht innerhalb der Nation die Tendenz zu übersteigerter Gleichförmigkeit. Wenn jedermann sich in jedem Teil des Landes in gleicher Weise zu Hause fühlen kann, der Unterschied zwischen einer Stadt und der anderen im Schwinden begriffen ist, die Menschen genormt werden und untereinander austauschbar wie die Teile einer serienweise hergestellten Maschine – das alles trägt zum Abbau der Kultur bei.

Der Besitz einer nationalen Kultur, deren konstitutive Zellen örtlich gebundene Kulturen sind, bringt noch etliche Vorzüge am Rande mit. Für den einzelnen ist es interessanter und anregender, einer Kultur anzugehören, die eine Vielzahl anderer Menschen umschließt, die zu gleicher Zeit Landsleute und Ortsfremde sind. Ebenso bedeutet eine Nation, innerhalb derer verschiedene Tendenzen wirksam sind, eine geringere Bedrohung für die Nachbarn als eine in Uniformität gepresste Nation. Die Menschen sind immer zu Feindseligkeiten untereinander geneigt, und es ist viel besser, dass sich Abneigung zwischen kleinen Gruppen auslässt, die einander kennen und die schließlich trotz allem wissen, dass sie irgendwie miteinander auskommen müssen; besser, als dass eine ganze Nation gegen eine andere ganze Nation aufgehetzt wird, die sie nicht kennt und nicht versteht. Wenn England eine friedliebende Nation ist, und ich glaube, man kann das sagen, so liegt ein Grund dafür sicherlich darin, dass die Engländer, Schotten und Walliser sich fortwährend über einander ärgern und ihrem Groll Luft

verschaffen, dass die Leute aus Cornwall die Engländer argwöhnisch als Ausländer betrachten; und dass in Yorkshire alle miteinander als Ausländer gelten, in einer Grafschaft, die dazu neigt, sich selbst aus irgendeinem Grunde der ganzen übrigen Insel überlegen zu fühlen.

Mein Hauptgesichtspunkt aber ist die Konzeption einer nationalen Kultur als Produkt, nicht bloß Summe der sie konstituierenden lokalen Kulturen. Ist dieser Gesichtspunkt haltbar, dann ist es nur noch ein Schritt zu dem Schluss, dass auch eine nationale Kultur keine selbstgenügsame Einheit darstellt, sondern dass sie nur gedeihen kann im Austausch mit anderen, beeinflussend und beeinflusst werdend, und dass eine nationale Kultur sich tatsächlich nur erfüllen kann als Teil in einem größeren Ganzen. Dies drängt zur Idee einer europäischen Gesellschaft und einer europäischen Kultur. Aber nun kommt man nicht etwa zu der Idee einer Einheitskultur, in der alle nationalen Unterschiede ausgelöscht sind; vielmehr sind es gerade die nationalen Eigenheiten, die jede einzelne Nation zum Ganzen beiträgt. Im Idealfall würde eine Gesellschaft und eine Kultur schließlich die ganze Welt umfassen; aber selbst wenn wir uns eine solche Weltgesellschaft auch nur vorstellen, müssen wir zu ihr auf dem richtigen Wege aufsteigen: vom Bekannten und Verwirklichten zum Unbekannten.

Nun ist eine nationale Kultur noch nicht vollständig erklärt, wenn man sie in die einzelnen regionalen Bestandteile zerlegt hat. Es gibt neben den geografischen noch andere Unterteilungen und Akzente. In meinem letzten Buch habe ich von der Wichtigkeit der Differenzierung sozialer Klassen gesprochen – nicht in dem strengen Sinn des indischen Kastensystems, sondern fließend und einen ständigen Wechsel von einer Klasse zur andern erlaubend.[4] Der Ausdruck „Klasse" schien sehr unglücklich gewählt zu sein; er lässt viele Menschen nur an die Missbräuche und Ungerechtigkeiten denken, die in der Vergangenheit in jeder geschichtlichen Gesellschaft zutage getreten sind, und ist deshalb mit heftigen Erregungen und leidenschaftlichen Vorurteilen verbunden. Vielleicht wäre ein besserer Ausdruck für Klasse „erbliche Funktion". Es sollte in jeder Gesellschaft verschiedene Schichten derselben Kultur geben, und jede Schicht sollte von der anderen Nahrung empfangen und umgekehrt sie ernähren. Für die Übermittlung der Kultur – die in erster Linie der Familie zufällt – ist es wünschenswert, dass die Mehrzahl der Menschen etwa das Leben der Eltern führt, am gleichen Ort und in gleichen oder ähnlichen Berufen.

Für den Organismus Europa hat das Folgende Bedeutung: Keiner von uns versteht so gut all die verschiedenen Arten von Menschen, die das

Gesicht eines anderen Landes bestimmen, wie wir die Arten von Menschen im eigenen Lande verstehen. Aber wir können diejenigen Ausländer verstehen, die uns selbst ähnlich sind, und wir können in mancher Hinsicht besser mit ihnen auskommen als mit den meisten unserer Landsleute. Die große Mehrheit einer jeden Nation kann nur wenig Kontakt mit fremden Kulturen haben, aber indirekt erfährt sie durch die bewusstere Minderheit des eigenen Landes den Nutzen, den der Austausch von Gedanken und Gefühlen innerhalb Europas mit sich bringt.

Notwendig sind also gesellschaftliche und geistige Verbindung und Austausch der intellektuellen Oberschichten, die anderen Nationen das Beste der eigenen Nation geben und von anderen Nationen all die Einrichtungen, Gedanken und schöpferischen Einfälle übernehmen können, die den eigenen Landsleuten nützlich sind. Was das für die Freizügigkeit im Reiseverkehr, den freien Austausch von Büchern und Zeitschriften bedeutet, brauche ich nicht zu sagen, weil diese Notwendigkeiten jedem einsichtig sind und eine Diskussion darüber die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Zustände behandeln müsste, auf die ich hier nicht eingehen kann. Mein Hauptgesichtspunkt ist die Wichtigkeit des Netzes sich überschneidender Loyalitäten – die sogar miteinander in Konflikt geraten können. Ein sehr großer Teil internationaler Organisation sollte daher in Körperschaften und Institutionen bestehen, die miteinander enger verbunden sind als jede einzelne mit der eigenen Regierung.

Das Problem der internationalen Einheit in der Mannigfaltigkeit wird sehr deutlich im Erziehungswesen. In einer Rundfunkansprache, die ich vor drei Jahren für Deutschland hielt, habe ich den Standpunkt vertreten, dass keine Universität sich als nationale Einrichtung betrachten sollte, selbst wenn sie vom Staat erhalten wird; vielmehr sollten sich die Universitäten aller Nationen gegenseitiger Treue und der zu gemeinsamen Idealen versichern. Und dies soll eine direkte Verbindung von Universität zu Universität sein, und nicht eine, die von den betreffenden Regierungen arrangiert ist.[5] Anderseits wäre ich sehr misstrauisch gegen jeden Plan, die verschiedenen Universitäten zur Uniformität zu bringen. Ganz gewiss haben sich Schulmänner eine Menge Gedanken gemacht, wie man die Welt im Allgemeinen und Europa im Besonderen einen könne durch Einigung auf ein einziges Erziehungssystem für alle Länder. Wer glaubt, dass jeder Bürger des eigenen Landes die gleiche Erziehung genießen und der einzige Unterschied zwischen jungen Leuten darin bestehen solle, dass einige mehr und andere weniger wert sind, von dieser einheitlichen Erziehung zu profitieren, wird

es wahrscheinlich auch gutheißen, dass alle Länder ein und dasselbe Erziehungssystem bekommen. Da der Mensch schwach und fehlbar ist, würde das in der Praxis ein System bedeuten, das anscheinend irgendwo anders gut funktioniert und nun allen entweder von außen aufgezwungen oder von innen unbeholfen nachgeahmt wird. Wir müssen uns daran erinnern, dass ein Erziehungssystem teilweise durch Planung und teilweise durch Wachstum entsteht, durch das gleiche Ineinander von Inspiration und Berechnung, das auch bei der Entstehung eines Gedichtes im Spiele ist. Jedes Erziehungssystem entspringt einer bestimmten Kultur und setzt diese voraus, und jede gewaltsame Störung wird sowohl der Erziehung als auch der dazugehörigen Kultur schaden. Ein universales Erziehungssystem für die ganze Welt oder für Europa könnte die lokalen Kulturen verraten, die zu erhalten lebenswichtig ist. Wenn wir je zu gleichförmiger Erziehung gelangen sollten, so müssten wir dem vorher entgegengereift sein, und unser nachfolgendes Planen müsste dann nur dem Faktum Rechnung tragen, dass wir einander ähnlicher geworden sind.

Aber während ich mich vor jedem Versuch, unsere Erziehungsmethoden auf einen Nenner zu bringen, fürchte, gibt es doch erzieherische Werte, die wir, wie ich glaube, alle voransetzen sollten, wobei jeder seine eigenen Lehrmethoden anwenden möge. Dazu gehört das Studium der lateinischen und griechischen Sprache und Literatur und die Geschichte Griechenlands und Roms. Dazu gehört ferner das Studium der Literatur und Geschichte Israels – für die meisten in diesem Fall nur durch Übersetzungen erschließbar, für einige wenige jedoch gewiss durch Originaltexte.

In jedem Plan zur Vereinigung Europas werden wir höchstwahrscheinlich, sobald er Erziehungsfragen berührt, eine Menge davon hören, wie wichtig es sei, neben der eignen auch noch andere moderne Sprachen zu lernen. Wenn darauf bestanden wird, droht das Studium des Lateinischen und Griechischen verdrängt zu werden. Ich messe dem Studium moderner Sprachen größte Wichtigkeit bei, und ich habe es Zeit meines Lebens bedauert, dass ich ein so schlechter Sprachkenner bin. Aber ich muss darauf hinweisen, dass für meine Zwecke – nämlich die Einheit der europäischen Kultur zu sichern – die Sprachen der anderen Völker nicht die alten Sprachen ersetzen können. Wenige können auch nur eine andere Sprache so gut beherrschen wie ihre eigene, und es wird immer andere geben, die mit dieser Sprache aufgewachsen sind, die sie also besser verstehen, als es ein Ausländer je erhoffen kann. Aber die toten Sprachen sind uns allen gemeinsamer Besitz. Wir alle gehen von demselben Punkt aus und schulden

alle den Kulturen Griechenlands, Roms und Israels das Gleiche. Je tiefer wir in diese Sprachen und Literaturen eindringen, desto besser verstehen wir unsere eigene und jede andere Kultur des modernen Europas.

Ich habe vorgeschlagen, dass unsere Vereinheitlichungspläne in Erziehungs- und anderen Fragen den bereits bestehenden und noch übriggebliebenen Ähnlichkeiten Rechnung tragen sollten; zu gleicher Zeit sollten sie die Unterschiedlichkeiten respektieren, die Ausdruck des Nationalcharakters und der Geschichte eines jeden Volkes sind. Ebenso werden Sie, wenn wir jetzt dazu kommen, den wichtigsten Teil unseres gemeinsamen Fundaments, den christlichen Glauben, zu betrachten, nicht von mir erwarten, dass ich mich mit Plänen zur Wiedervereinigung der Kirchen beschäftige, sei es durch totalen Einschluss in einen einzigen Verband – eine zu entfernte Aussicht, als dass sie in unseren Gesichtskreis treten könnte –, sei es durch ökumenische Verbrüderung unter den verschiedenen Bekenntnissen. Es sind die gleichen Motive – und für den Christen sind sie noch zwingender –, die wie bei anderen Wiedervereinigungsbestrebungen für dieses Ziel sprechen. Es sind aber auch dieselben Versuchungen: zu planen, was sich nicht planen lässt.[6] All solche Bemühungen sind insofern gut, als sie Kirchenmänner verschiedener Nationen und Konfessionen in Versammlungen zusammenführen, die das persönliche und menschliche Verständnis fördern; sie sind jedoch verfehlt, wenn sie glauben, Völker religiös vereinigen zu können durch Abkommen, Erklärungen gemeinsamen Glaubens, Verbindungen und Verhandlungen zwischen kirchlichen Autoritäten. Der religiöse Kultus, das wirkliche religiöse Leben eines Volkes, ist aufs Engste mit der Kultur dieses Volkes verknüpft. Für die meisten ist er unlösbar verwoben mit Leidenschaften und Vorurteilen, die anderen Quellen entspringen und die mit religiösem Eifer verwechselt werden. Von daher erklärt es sich, dass Religion, die stärkste einigende Kraft, im Lauf der Geschichte auch die heftigste Feindseligkeit, Furcht und Uneinigkeit ausgelöst hat.

In dem kleinen Buch, das ich letztes Jahr veröffentlichte, habe ich mich des Längeren mit dem Verhältnis von Religion und Kultur befasst.[7] Dasselbe Thema ist umfänglicher und mit einer Fülle von Gelehrsamkeit, die ich nur bewundern kann, von dem Historiker Christopher Dawson behandelt worden, dessen Band Gifford Lectures unter dem Titel *Religion and Culture* beinahe gleichzeitig mit meinem Buch erschien. Wir stimmen darin überein, dass keine Kultur geformt werden oder sich unbegrenzt erhalten kann, außer in Verbindung mit einer Religion. Und ich stimme auch völlig mit dem

überein, was er über die säkularisierte wissenschaftliche Kultur sagt, die im Begriff ist, in der ganzen Welt die älteren östlichen und westlichen Kulturen zu ersetzen. Ich möchte eine Stelle wörtlich anführen:

> . . . die neue wissenschaftliche Kultur ist bar jedes positiven religiösen Gehaltes. Es ist ein unübersehbarer Komplex von Techniken und Spezialfunktionen ohne lenkenden Geist, ohne Basis moralischer Werte und ohne einigendes geistiges Ziel. Das blieb solange verborgen, als die moderne Wissenschaft auf die Völker des Westens beschränkt war und die Verbindung mit der Ideologie des Humanismus und Liberalismus aufrechterhielt. Aber jetzt, da sie sich wirklich über die ganze Welt verbreitet hat, ist ihre religiöse Indifferenz oder Leere sichtbar geworden, da sie ja en bloc von jedem Staat übernommen werden kann, der imstande ist, Spezialisten auszubilden und Maschinen und Ausrüstungen zu kaufen, wie es etwa Japan in den letzten sechzig Jahren getan hat. – Eine Kultur dieser Art ist überhaupt keine Kultur im traditionellen Sinne – d. h. kein Ordnungsgefüge, das jede Seite des menschlichen Lebens in einer lebendigen geistigen Gemeinschaft zusammenfasst. Sie kann sogar zum Feind des menschlichen Lebens selbst werden, und der Sieg der Technokratie kann die Zerstörung der Humanität bedeuten, denn es ist unmöglich, an der Art vorbeizusehen, in der die letzten Triumphe der angewandten Wissenschaft zu zerstörerischen Zwecken verwandt wurden.[8]

Ich zitiere diese Stelle als Vorspann zu meiner Ansicht, dass das gemeinsame Erbe einer Tradition christlicher Kultur das stärkste Band zwischen den Völkern Europas ist. Rassen- und Sprachverwandtschaft haben einiges Gewicht – wobei mir scheint, als sei Sprachverwandtschaft wichtiger als Rassenverwandtschaft. Es ist meiner Meinung nach für mein Volk entscheidender, dass unsere Sprache ein Gemisch von keltischen, germanischen, skandinavischen und französischen Elementen ist, als dass wir dieses selbe Blutgemisch in unseren Adern haben. Doch religiöse Verwandtschaft ist weit stärker. Ich rede hier nicht als Apologet für das Christentum. Ich spreche von unserem gemeinsamen Werden in der Vergangenheit; weise darauf hin, dass, ob die Mehrheit in unseren Völkern dem Christenglauben treu bleibt oder nicht, unsere überdauernden Gemeinsamkeiten im Denken, Fühlen und Handeln in erster Linie auf unserer christlichen Geschichte beruhen. Denn ich glaube, dass die Religion die Kultur prägt. Die religiöse Form ändert sich von Ort zu Ort, weil die jeweilige lokale Kultur die Religion

beeinflusst, wie die Religion die lokale Kultur. Die Kultur ändert sich von Ort zu Ort, weil man niemals an zwei verschiedenen Orten die gleiche Kultur erhält. Kultur und Religion sind so eng miteinander verbunden, wie immer man ihre Verbindung auch deuten mag, dass die gemeinsame christliche Ausformung in der Geschichte uns jegliches Band gibt, das zwischen unseren Kulturen besteht – selbst wenn die meisten Menschen keine Christen mehr sind.

Ob es besser wäre, vom Standpunkt der Einheit der europäischen Gesellschaft, wenn es keine Spaltungen innerhalb der Christenheit gäbe, ist eine Frage, die ich hier beiseitelasse. Ob Einheit von Nutzen wäre oder nicht, hinge unter dem hier vertretenen Gesichtspunkt davon ab, was die Menschen aus der nominellen Einheit machen. Womit ich mich hier befasse, sind die unbewussten Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen den Völkern mit christlicher Geschichte. Natürlich muss ein Christ mit einem Mitchristen, der vom Buddhismus, Shintoismus oder afrikanischen Paganismus konvertiert ist, ein gemeinsames Band haben, bedeutender als jedes Band, das ihn mit einem Landsmann gleicher Rasse und Sprache, der aber nicht Christ ist, vereinigt. Aber es ist ein anderes Band: Ich spreche hier nicht von Individuen, sondern von dem, was eine Gemeinsamkeit zwischen Völkern ausmacht, deren Kulturgeschichte über achthundert oder tausend oder mehr Jahre eine Geschichte christlicher Kultur gewesen ist.

Ich beabsichtige nicht, eine Liste der gemeinsamen Merkmale jeglicher christlicher Kultur zusammenzustellen, etwa den Glauben an ein Weltgesetz, den Glauben an absolutes Recht und Unrecht, den Glauben an ein Gesetz über dem Staat, dem jedermann in jedem Land unterworfen ist, und die Überzeugung, dass Ungerechtigkeit, Unterdrückung und Grausamkeit niemals gerechtfertigt werden können. Christliche Gesellschaften haben immer wieder dieses Gesetz verletzt, aber solange sie es nicht widerrufen, hören sie nicht auf, christliche Gesellschaften zu sein. Ich lege mehr Gewicht darauf, dass das, was wir die Kultur eines Volkes nennen – die Ganzheit der Lebensweise, der Formen des Fühlens, Denkens und Handelns, des Ausdrucks in Kunst, Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft –, untrennbar verbunden ist mit der traditionellen Religion des Volkes. Ich habe in meinem Buch über den Begriff der Kultur dargelegt, dass, wenn wir einen primitiven Stamm mit einer eigenen Religion betrachten, wir diese Religion nicht deutlich von der Kultur unterscheiden können, und dass diese Unterscheidung erst deutlich in Erscheinung tritt, wenn wir eine Religionsstufe betrachten, die von mehreren Völkern unterschiedlicher Kultur angenommen ist, wie

das etwa bei der christlichen, islamischen oder buddhistischen Religion der Fall ist.[9] Bei den „Weltreligionen" sehen wir, wie die jeweilige lokale Kultur den Kult und das Dogma modifiziert, aber ebenso sehen wir die Religion ihrerseits die Kulturen beeinflussen und eine Art Verwandtschaft zwischen ihnen hervorbringen. Und ich behaupte, dass die Religion so sehr das wichtigste Element im Gefüge der Kultur darstellt, dass ungeachtet aller unserer religiösen Differenzen, ja selbst des Umstandes, dass das christliche Bewusstsein innerhalb des größten Teiles unserer Bevölkerung ständig im Schwinden ist, die gemeinsame christliche Tradition immer noch die stärkste Rechtfertigung dafür ist, Europa für eine Gesellschaft zu halten und nicht für einen bloß geografischen Begriff oder ein Gefüge gegenseitiger Abhängigkeiten von Quellen und Märkten oder eine Völkergruppe mit einander ergänzenden Fähigkeiten und Talenten. Es ist diese uns von Rom überkommene und die Erbschaft römischen Gesetzes und griechischen Denkens und griechischer Kunst mit sich bringende christliche Tradition, die eine Verständigung zwischen zwei beliebigen europäischen Denkern möglich macht, auch wenn sich keiner von ihnen zum christlichen Glauben bekennt.

Zum Abschluss möchte ich noch auf zwei Punkte hinweisen. Der erste ist der, dass die kulturelle „Idee einer europäischen Gesellschaft" keine endgültigen Grenzen oder gar Barrieren errichtet. Sie setzt ein Europa, ohne anderes damit auszuschließen. Ich sagte eingangs, die Familie sei die erste kulturelle Einheit, das Dorf die zweite, die Region die dritte, die vierte die Nation, und schließlich Europa: Der ideale Endpunkt wäre die ganze Welt. Wir haben in den letzten Jahren viel über die Nation und die Welt gesprochen; vielleicht haben wir das Dorf und Europa noch nicht in ihrer rechten Beziehung zur Nation und zur Welt gesehen. Aber wenn die lokale Gemeinde sowohl aus eigenem Recht als um der größeren Einheit willen besteht, aus der sie ihre Nahrung zieht, so muss auch Europa willens sein, von außerhalb Nährstoff aufzunehmen. Man kann ein Nationalist in seiner Provinz sein und ein Provinzler in seiner Nation; man kann auch ein Provinzler in Europa sein. Mir war zum Beispiel immer schon der Gedanke teuer, dass wir viel von Indien zu lernen hätten, dass aber der Fehler, dem die europäischen Bewunderer der indischen Gedankenwelt im 19. Jahrhundert erlegen sind, darin bestand, dass sie in ihrer Begeisterung für die indische Philosophie und den indischen Mystizismus versucht haben, die abendländische Sehweise durch die orientalische, die christliche Philosophie durch die brahmanische zu ersetzen, anstatt den Versuch zu machen, beide langsam und geduldig zu einem Ganzen zu verschmelzen.

Über den zweiten Punkt habe ich bereits gesprochen. Unser Denken vollzieht sich heute, wie ich befürchte, so sehr in Begriffen der Politik und Wirtschaft, dass wir dazu neigen, jedes Problem in die Sprache der Praxis und Organisation zu übersetzen. Die Überlegungen, die ich hier vorgebracht habe, lassen sich nicht direkt in die Tat umsetzen. Sie ändern nicht die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Gegebenheiten, noch nützen sie direkt in der Auseinandersetzung mit den täglichen Problemen, die eine sofortige Lösung fordern. Aber unsere bedachtsame Planung wird um so wirksamer sein, meine ich, wenn wir der Eingrenzung des Bezirks, in dem Planung möglich ist, einige Aufmerksamkeit widmen, und wenn wir eine Ahnung davon haben, was außerhalb dieses Bezirks liegt. Und schließlich ist es wünschenswert, dass wir für die Befestigung einer europäischen Gesellschaft ein Motiv vor Augen haben, das positiver ist als das einfache Motiv der Selbsterhaltung. Denn auf die Dauer kann sich keine Gesellschaft erhalten, noch verdient, erhalten zu bleiben, die nicht, bewusst oder unbewusst, ein Motiv besitzt, das höher und uneigennütziger ist als die Selbsterhaltung. Sie muss, indem sie sich erhält, für alle Menschen zu allen Zeiten Werte verfechten, und es ist besser für eine Gesellschaft, bei der Verteidigung dieser Werte unterzugehen, als mit ihrem Verrat zu überleben.

T. S. ELIOT

ORIGINAL ENGLISH TEXT[1]

I aim in this address to draw together some of the ideas to be found in two small books, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, which I published in 1939, and *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, which I published just a year ago. Anyone who has read these two essays will recognise the ideas as familiar: but I hope that the present selection and arrangement may exhibit them in a new light.

The bewildering complexity of political, economic and technical problems in the last few years, has turned the minds of men, even of men accustomed to reflect on such matters, to schemes for unifying the nations. Those who propound such schemes are men who have made a close study of political, economic or industrial science. I do not propose to enter into competition with experts, or to criticise their proposals.

It is not with political or economic or scientific plans of unity that I am concerned, but with the problem of the unity of culture, and specifically European culture. And although this will involve the consideration of problems about which we can do nothing directly, and although it will not solve

the problems of survival which must be dealt with month by month and year by year, I think that reflection on these matters has a very practical utility. For the union of men which is only based upon fear – fear of war, fear of starvation, fear of chaos – is undependable. And even sentimental unity, the unity of liking each other, is less dependable than the unity which comes from what we have in common – the ways in which we are alike. Is there any organic relationship of the parts of Europe? If there is, it should be taken account of in our organised unification of the parts of Europe; for it is the fundamental reality with which our planners must reckon, as it is the final justification of their efforts. We need to feel that the realisation of Europe is something good in itself, and being good in itself, good for the rest of the world as well. It must be a Europe which will not only preserve itself, but in so doing, benefit humanity in general.

Here I must make an apparent digression. There are various pairs of terms which are opposites; and in using which we sometimes tend to speak as if the concrete realities to which they point are reciprocally exclusive. Thus we contrast growth with construction, or the mechanism with the organism; as we contrast the planned with the spontaneous, the conscious with the unconscious. Anything, we tend to think, is either a machine or an organism; either planned or spontaneous, either conscious or unconscious. But in concrete situations we find elements of both. I may illustrate from my own experience in writing a poem. In writing a poem of any length – a poem which requires labour – I find on retrospect that I cannot wholly distinguish, in the result, what was calculated from what was spontaneous, what was conscious from what was unconscious, what was growth from what was construction. I know that the unexpected arrives, and I know that I have given many hours of conscious toil. I may start merely from the awareness that there is some complex of feeling and thought inside me, which I must somehow put into words, simply because I shall feel uncomfortable until this embryo has come to birth. But the actual process of bringing it to birth involves a good deal of deliberate search for words, and in the process of this conscious toil the features of the unborn infant may be changed out of all recognition.[2] On the other hand, I may start with a kind of abstract framework or scaffolding; but in the process of giving body to the framework, words and phrases and feelings come to me which alter the framework itself. I may write a poem because I am aware of a poem inside me to be written. On the other hand, I have written several poems simply because my publishers wanted a new poem from me for a special occasion. A few

poems have been dashed off, by an irresistible impulse, when I ought to have being doing something else. Some of my verse, like the choruses in *The Rock* and the whole of *Murder in the Cathedral* were written because I wanted to seize any opportunity to write for the theatre. *Murder in the Cathedral* was written for a Festival at Canterbury Cathedral; I sat down to think what subject was suitable; I naturally thought of the murder of Archbishop Becket; I read Tennyson's play on the same subject, and thought it worth while trying to write something better.[3] Whether I succeeded is a question of opinion. But certainly I have found, with every poem, that the planning directs the growth, and the growth indicates the next stage of planning; and I cannot tell afterwards, and I do not believe anyone can tell, what is inspiration and what is calculation. The two are inextricable when any work of art results. Therefore I am inclined to think that the social engineer, the planner, needs some feeling for the nature of the material on which he works; and that those who have some feeling for the material, may be able to inform the planner of defects in his plan; and to remind him that the plan must be transformed by the material, as much as the material is transformed by the effects of his plan.

I have touched upon the writing of poetry, simply to illustrate my assertion that there are a number of opposites of discourse, like calculation and spontaneity, to which human life does not exactly correspond. Thus, we can say that what we call the culture of a society is a total thing – not merely the sum, but the consummation, of a great variety of activities – which is not, and cannot be planned; but in the various activities of which a great deal of planning is involved. And the planned activities affect the culture. Similarly, we can say that a society is not a machine, but an organism; but that it is of the nature of this organism to make and use machines – one kind of machine being the machinery of government – and that the machines which it makes affect the character of the organism.

The danger which always besets the social engineer – the type of mind which attempts to plan society – is to ignore or mistake the nature of the human material; or to attempt to alter the human material to fit the ideal machine, if the ideal machine does not seem to suit the actual human material. This has happened in the past in colonial government: when a governing people has, often with the most laudable intentions, attempted to introduce systems of government, of justice, of education, unsuited to the people whom they governed and were attempting to train for self-government. We are all inclined to believe that what is best for us, must

be best for everybody; because we think of our systems of government, justice and education as machines, which can be exported, and which everybody can be taught to use – whereas they are not merely machines, because they are machines evolved by a particular social organism for its own needs. But it may take the form, in any scheme for a supra-national organisation of the world in general, or of Europe in particular, of two errors: one, the assumption that the unit of calculation is the individual, the other that the unit is the nation as it exists to-day. The latter assumption attaches too much importance to the nation; the former gives it too little importance. A European Society which was merely a union of nations would not be a society, because it would form no organic entity, with a personality of its own: it would not have the effect of making the individual human being more proud of being a European than of being merely a German, a Frenchman, or whatever he is to-day. A Europe which was a mass of individuals owing no allegiance to anything but Europe, would be merely a machine. We cannot suppress or replace our loyalty to the nation, because the nation represents something more than a mass of men talking the same language who want to get the better of other nations: it represents a cultural unit. But it is not the only cultural unit.

I say that, from the cultural point of view, one's nation is merely one of a number of degrees and kinds of loyalty. Take degrees first. I believe that one of the conditions of unity such that we could speak of "European culture" is that the differences and diversities within each nation should be affirmed. I think first of the regional diversities. My first unit of culture is not the individual, but the family. There is first the "culture" of the family, then that of groups of families: that is to say, of the village, of the region in which people intermarry. There is the region in which speech is identical, in which there are local customs and local cookery. The tendency of our age is to obliterate local differences. In objecting to this, I am not inspired by any antiquarian sentiments. I am not concerned with the preservation of ancient local ways and customs, dress and speech, crafts and skills, unchanged. Life is change; and small areas must change their ways, as well as great ones. But in change I should wish the region, the town, the village, to preserve its identity; I cannot admit that change and progress necessarily mean increasing uniformity.

It may be that no nation has, at any one time, exemplified a perfect balance and harmony of the parts and the whole; and that the nearest we can hope to get is for each tendency to assert itself when the other has gone too

far; so that separatist or regionalist movements will appear as the nation moves towards a monotonous uniformity and towards excessive centralisation of culture in its capital city; and that on the other hand a movement towards unification will appear as the parts assert themselves to the detriment of the whole. However this may be, I find in the diversity and unity within one nation whose culture is healthy, a kind of pattern for the larger unit which is Europe. The local cultures within a nation should contribute to the national culture, and in turn draw sustenance from it; and so it should be, and to some degree has been, between Europe and the several nations within it. To-day, certainly, the tendency is towards excessive uniformity within a nation. Where every individual can make himself equally at home in any part of his country, where there is decreasing difference between one town and another, where individuals become standardised and interchangeable like the components of a mass-produced piece of machinery – that is destructive of culture.

There are incidental advantages in having a national culture of which the component cells are local cultures. It is more interesting, and more stimulating for the individual to belong to a culture which contains a variety of other individuals who are at the same time compatriots and foreigners. Also, a nation which contains an active diversity within itself is less a menace to its neighbours than a nation which has been welded into uniformity. Human beings will always be prone to animosities against each other; and it is much better that dislike should be vented between small bodies of people, who know something about each other, and who after all know that they must live together somehow, than that it should take the form of one whole nation being aroused against another whole nation of people whom it does not know and does not understand. If Britain is a peace-loving nation – and I think it is – one reason surely is that the English, the Scots and the Welsh are constantly in a state of irritation with each other, and airing their grievances against each other; that the Cornish regard the English with suspicion as foreigners; and that all of them are foreigners in Yorkshire, a county which is inclined to regard itself as, for some reason, superior to all the rest of the Island.

My essential point is, however, the conception of a national culture as the product – not merely the sum – of an arrangement of local cultures within it. For, if this view is tenable, then it is only one step to the conclusion that a national culture itself is no self-sufficient entity, but that it can only thrive in communication with others, influencing and influenced; that, indeed, a

national culture can only fulfil itself as a component in a larger pattern. This makes the idea of a European society and of European culture impose itself. And observe that we do not arrive in this way at the idea of a uniform culture, in which all national differences will be obliterated; but that the national differences represent each nation's contribution to the whole. Ideally, the final society and the final culture would comprehend the whole world: but if we are even to conceive such a world-society, we must proceed towards it by the right steps, moving from the known and realised towards the unknown.

Now, a national culture is not fully accounted for when we have analysed it into regional cultures. There are other divisions and articulations besides the geographical. In my last book, I spoke of the importance of a differentiation of social classes – not rigid like the Indian caste system, but fluid and allowing of constant migrations between one class and another.[4] This seemed to be an unfortunate term to use: the term "class" connotes, to many people, only the abuses and injustice visible in every stratified society in the past, and is therefore associated with strong emotions and passionate prejudices. Perhaps a better term would be "hereditary function." I mean that in every society there should be different layers of the same culture, and that each layer should draw nourishment from the others and in turn nourish them. And for the transmission of culture – of which the primary agency is the family – it is desirable that the majority of people should live much the same life as their parents, in the same place, and in the same or similar occupations.

The relevance to the organism of Europe is this: that we none of us can know and understand equally well all of the various kinds of person who go to make up another country, as well as we understand all kinds in our own country. But we can understand foreigners like ourselves – and we can understand them better, and communicate with them better, in some respects, than with most of our compatriots. The great majority in any nation can have very little contact with foreign culture; it is indirectly, through the more conscious minority in their own country, that they experience the benefit of a circulation of thought and sensibility through Europe.

What is needed, then, is social and intellectual communication and circulation of the superior minority, who can impart to other nations the best that their own has to give, and take from other nations those customs, ideas and creative discoveries by which their fellow-countrymen can profit. Of all that this implies in the way of freedom of travel, freedom of circulation

of books and periodicals, I have no need to speak, because these needs are apparent to everyone, and a discussion of them leads to considering those political and economic arrangements with which I am not concerned. My essential point is the importance of a net-work of cross-loyalties – which may sometimes become even conflicting loyalties. A very large part of international organisation, therefore, should be of bodies and institutions bound to each other more closely than any of them is bound to its own Government.

The problem of international unity in diversity appears very clearly when we consider the subject of Education. In a broadcast talk which I gave to this country three years ago, I affirmed that no university ought to consider itself a national institution, even when it is supported by the state; but that there ought to be a nexus of loyalty to each other and to common ideals, between the universities of all nations – and that this should be a direct relationship, not merely one arranged by their respective governments.[5] But on the other hand, I should be very distrustful of any scheme for reducing the various universities to uniformity. There have been, I am sure, professional minds which have given much thought to the possibilities of unifying the world in general, and Europe in particular, by arriving at agreement on one system of education to be employed by every country. Those who believe that every citizen of their own country should have the same education, and that the only difference between young people should be between those who deserve rather more, and those who deserve rather less, of a uniform education, are likely to believe that it would be a good thing if all our countries had one and the same system. Human nature being frail and fallible, this is likely to mean in practice either the imposition from outside, or the ill-advised imitation from within, of some system which appears to work well elsewhere. But we must remember that a system of education is brought into existence partly through planning and partly through growth – by the same inextricable mixture of inspiration and calculation that goes to making a poem. Every system of education springs out of a particular culture, and implies that culture; and any violent disturbance of it will injure both the education and the culture to which it belongs. A universal system of education for the entire world, or for Europe, might betray the local cultures which it is vital to preserve. If we are ever to approximate to uniformity in education, we must grow that way first, and our subsequent planning must merely take account of the realities of our having grown more like each other.

But while I should dread any attempt to impose uniformity upon our methods of education, there are certain values in education which I think we should all put foremost, employing our own several kinds of scholarship. One of these is the study of Latin and Greek languages and literature, and the history of Greece and Rome. Another is the study of the literature and history of Israel – for the great majority, of course, only in translation; but certainly for a small minority in the original tongue.

It is likely that in any schemes of European unity, where they touch on the field of education, we shall hear a good deal about the importance of learning other modern languages than one's own; and the insistence on the importance of several modern languages may tend to crowd out the study of Latin and Greek. I attach the highest importance to modern language studies; it has been a matter of regret to me all my life that I am such a poor linguist as I am. But I must point out that for my purpose – that of affirming the unity of European culture – each other's languages are no substitute for the ancient languages. Few men can know even one other modern language as well as they can know their own; and there will always be persons to whom that language is native, who will understand it more profoundly than any foreigner ever can. But the dead languages are what we have in common. We all start equal, and we all owe the same debt to the culture of Greece, Rome and Israel. So far as we know these languages and literatures, we understand better both our own and every other culture of modern Europe.

I have suggested that our plans for unification in education as in other matters, should take account of such similarity as already exists, as still survives; at the same time respecting the diversities which are the outcome of the national character and history of each people. Similarly, when we come to consider the most important part of our common foundation – the Christian Faith – you will not expect me to occupy myself with schemes for re-uniting churches, either by total inclusion within one fold, which is a prospect too remote to enter into our perspective, or by oecumenical fraternisation between separated communions. There are the same motives – and to the Christian, still stronger motives – for cherishing these aims as for re-union of other kinds; there are the same dangers in attempting to plan the unplannable.[6] All such efforts are good, in bringing together churchmen of different nations and different confessions, in meetings which promote human and personal understanding; all are mistaken, if they assume that peoples can be united in religion solely as the result of treaties, declarations

of common faith, arrangements of inter-communion, and other negotiations between ecclesiastical authorities. The cult, the actual religious life of any people, is united to the culture of that people. For most men, it comes to be inextricably involved with passions and prejudices of other sources, which they confuse with religious zeal. It is for this reason that religion, which can be the strongest uniting force, has also proved itself in history to have released the strongest forces of animosity, fear and division.

In the small book I published last year – a German translation of which is about to appear – I dealt at some length with the subject of the relation of Religion and Culture.[7] The subject has been dealt with more fully, and with a wealth of scholarship which I can only admire, by the historian, Mr. Christopher Dawson, whose volume of Gifford Lectures, under the title of *Religion and Culture*, appeared at almost the same time as my book. We are in agreement in holding that no culture can be formed, or can indefinitely maintain itself, except in relation to a religion. And I am wholly in agreement with him in what he says about the secularised, scientific culture which is tending to replace, the world over, the older religious culture East and West. I shall quote him on this point.

> . . . . . the new scientific culture is devoid of all positive spiritual content. It is an immense complex of techniques and specialisms without a guiding spirit, with no basis of common moral values, with no unifying spiritual aim. This was not evident so long as modern science was confined to the peoples of the West and maintained its connection with the ideology of Humanism and liberalism, but now that it has become truly world-wide, its spiritual neutrality or vacuity has become evident, since it can be taken over *en bloc* by any state which is able to train specialists and buy machinery and equipment, as Japan has done in the last sixty years.
>
> A culture of this kind is no culture at all in the traditional sense – that is to say it is not an order which integrates every side of human life in a living spiritual community.
>
> Indeed it may become the enemy of human life itself and the victory of technocracy may mean the destruction of humanity since it is impossible to ignore the way in which the latest triumphs of applied science have been turned to destructive ends.[8]

I quote this passage as a preamble to saying that I think the strongest bond between the peoples of Europe is their common inheritance of a tradition

of Christian culture. Kinship of race and kinship of language count for something – indeed I suspect that kinship of language is more important than kinship of race: it is, I incline to think, more important for my people that our language is a mixture of Celtic, Teutonic, Scandinavian and French elements, than that we have the same mixture of blood in our veins. But kinship in religion is much stronger. I am not here speaking as an apologist for Christianity. I am talking of our common formation in the past: calling attention to the fact that whether the majority of our people remain faithful to Christianity or not, our persisting likenesses in thinking and feeling and behaving are due most of all to our Christian history. Because I believe that religion forms culture. The form of the religion will vary from place to place – because local culture affects religion, just as religion affects local culture. The culture will vary from place to place, because you never get the same culture in two different places.

Culture and religion are so closely related, however you interpret their relation, that a common historical Christian formation gives us whatever bond we have between our cultures – even when the majority of people have ceased to be Christian.

Whether it would be better, from the point of view of the unity of European society, if there were no divisions within Christendom, is a question with which I am not here concerned. Whether unity was better or not, would depend, from the point of view here taken, upon what men made of their nominal unity. What I am here concerned with are the unconscious likenesses between people of Christian formation in history. A Christian must, of course, have a common bond with any fellow Christian who is a convert from Buddhism, or Shintoism, or from African paganism, more important than any bond to fellow-countrymen of his own race and speech who are not Christians. But it is a different kind of bond: here I am speaking not of individuals but of that which makes a likeness between the peoples whose cultural history, for eight hundred or a thousand or more years, has been a history of Christian culture.

I do not propose to draw up a list of common characteristics of Christian culture, such as the belief in Universal Law, the belief in absolute right and wrong, the belief that there is a Law above the State by which all men everywhere must be judged; the belief that injustice, oppression and cruelty can never be justified. Christian societies have again and again violated the Law; they do not cease to be Christian societies until they repudiate it. My point

is rather that what we call the "culture" of a people – the totality of ways of living, of feeling and thinking and behaving, of expression in thought and art and in social custom – is inextricably involved with the traditional religion of that people. I have suggested in my book on "The Definition of Culture" that when we consider a primitive tribe with a local religion of its own, we cannot clearly distinguish the religion from the culture; and that this distinction only makes its appearance, when we reach the stage of a religion – be it Christianity, Islam or Buddhism – which has been embraced by several peoples of different cultural origins.[9] In the "world religions," we observe the local culture modifying the cult and the doctrine; but we also observe the religion modifying, and bringing about a kinship between, the cultures. And I say that religion is so much the most important element in the formation of culture, that, with all our religious differences, even with the increasing ignorance of Christianity among masses of our populations, the common Christian tradition is still the strongest reason for thinking of Europe as a society, rather than a mere geographical term, or an interdependence of resources and markets, or a group of peoples with complementary skills and talents. It is this Christian tradition, coming to us from Rome, and bringing with it the inheritance of Roman Law and the inheritance of the thought and art of Greece, which makes possible understanding between any two European thinkers, even when neither of them is a professing Christian.

I want to make two points in closing. The first is that the cultural "idea of a European society" is not one which sets any definite frontiers, or any barriers. It is an assertion of Europe which is not an exclusion of anything else. I said at the beginning that the family was the first cultural unit, the village community the second, the region the third, the nation the fourth, and Europe beyond that: the ideal end is the whole world. We have, in recent years, talked a good deal about the nation and the world; perhaps we have not yet seen the village and Europe in their proper relation to the nation and the world. But if the local community exists both in its own right and for the sake of a larger unit, from which in turn it derives nourishment, so Europe itself must be willing to draw nourishment from elsewhere. It is possible to be a provincial nationalist as well as a provincial in one's own country; it is also possible to be a provincial European. I have always, for instance, cherished the belief that we have much to learn from India; and that the fault of the European admirers of Indian thought in the nineteenth

century, has been that in their admiration for Indian philosophy and mysticism, they have sought to substitute the Eastern vision for the Western vision, the Brahmanic philosophy for the Christian, instead of trying to integrate, slowly and patiently, the one with the other.

My second point is one which I have tried to make already. But our minds, nowadays, are I suspect so set in terms of politics and economics that we tend to try to transform every subject-matter into terms of manipulation and planning. The considerations with which I have been occupied are not such as can be translated directly into terms of action. They do not alter the realities of politics and economics, nor do they help directly in dealing with the day to day problems which demand an immediate solution. But our deliberate planning will be all the more effective, I think, if we devote some attention to drawing the boundaries of the areas within which planning is possible; and if we have some perception of what lies outside these areas. And finally, it is desirable that we should set before ourselves some motive for the affirmation of a European society, more positive than the simple motive of self-preservation. For in the long run no society can preserve itself, or deserves preservation, unless it has some motive, whether conscious or unconscious, higher and more disinterested than self-preservation. It must, in preserving itself, be asserting values for all men at all times; and it is better for a society to perish in asserting these values, than to survive by betraying them.

NOTES

1. "The Idea of a European Society," a lecture delivered in English in Hamburg on 29 Oct 1949, and elsewhere in Germany during TSE's three-week tour. Translated into German anonymously. TSE wrote to Lord William Henderson, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on 19 Apr 1949: "I discussed possible subjects last year with Professor Clemen of Munich when he was in London. His suggestion was that I should prepare two addresses, that one should be of a more general kind and should be in the field of thought with which I was concerned in two long essays, *The Idea of a Christian Society* and my recent *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture*." TSE wrote to John Palmer, editor of the *Sewanee Review*, on 19 Sept: "As for the German lectures, I doubt whether any of them will be such as you would want to publish. There will be one on the lines of *The Idea of a Christian Society* and my *Culture* book which will not say anything new probably to people who have seen these books"; and to the German publisher Peter Suhrkamp on 8 Dec: "I hope that the text of *The Aims of Poetic Drama* reached you safely. I shall send the other two texts as soon as I have the time to put them in final order. It seems to me that my lecture on European Society would be best for *Der Monat*, and the one on Shakespeare for the Hamburg University paper, but I should like, if I may, to leave it to your discretion which should

be sent to which." In the event, Suhrkamp placed "The Development of Shakespeare's Verse" for translation as "Shakespeares Verskunst" in *Der Monat* (7.415), and "The Idea of a European Society" in the *Hamburger akademische Rundschau*.

The spelling of the German text has been modernized following the orthography reform of 1996 (revised in 2004 and 2006).

2. TSE previously employed the embryo metaphor for the creative process in his "Critical Note" to *The Collected Poems of Harold Monro* (1933): "It is a poet's business to be original . . . only so far as is dictated, not by the idea – for there is no idea – but by the nature of that dark embryo within him which gradually takes on the form and speech of a poem" (4.522).

3. In Mar 1933, TSE was invited to collaborate on the pageant play *The Rock* by Rev. Rosslyn Webb Odell, the director of the Forty-Five Churches Fund, which aimed to finance church building in London. George Bell, the Bishop of Chichester, then commissioned TSE to write a play for the Canterbury Festival, *Murder the Cathedral* (1935). Both were directed by E. Martin Browne. TSE wrote to Elsie Fogerty on 22 Nov 1934: "The subject of St Thomas of Canterbury has dramatic possibilities unexplored by Tennyson" (*L7* 387). Tennyson's verse drama *Becket* (1879) was first produced in 1893.

4. After identifying the "persistence of social classes" as an important factor in "the hereditary transmission of culture within a culture" in the introduction to *NTDC* (7.197), TSE argued in the first chapter: "As a society develops towards functional complexity and differentiation, we may expect the emergence of several cultural levels: in short, the culture of the class or group will present itself. . . . [T]he difference of opinion turns on whether the transmission of group culture must be by inheritance . . . or whether it can be hoped that some mechanism of selection will be found, so that every individual shall in due course take his place at the highest cultural level for which his natural aptitudes qualify him" (7.204).

5. TSE maintained in *Die Einheit der europäischen Kultur*, broadcast on the BBC German Service in Mar 1946: "No university ought to be merely a national institution, even if it is supported by the nation. The universities of Europe should have their common ideals, they should have their obligations towards each other. They should be independent of the governments of the countries in which they are situated" (6.719).

6. TSE expressed his opposition to schemes for Christian reunion in *Reunion by Destruction* (1943) (6.447) and in *NTDC* (7.235).

7. *Beiträge zum Begriff der Kultur* [*NTDC*], trans. Gerhard Hensel (Frankfurt a. M.; Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag vorm. S. Fischer, 1949). The reference to the forthcoming German translation is omitted in the German text, though publication details are provided in a footnote at the beginning of the essay.

8. Christopher Dawson, *Religion and Culture* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1948), 214-15. Dawson delivered the Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh in 1947. In 1950, TSE included this volume in "Books of the Year Chosen by Eminent Contemporaries" (7.576).

9. TSE argued in *NTDC* that "in the most primitive societies no clear distinction is visible between religious and non-religious activities; and that as we proceed to examine the more developed societies, we perceive a greater distinction, and finally contrast and opposition, between these activities. The sort of identity of religion and culture which we observe amongst peoples of very low development cannot recur except in the New Jerusalem" (7.235).

TEXTUAL NOTE

The twenty-one-page typescript is in the archive of the Eliot Estate. The two typescripts in the Hayward Bequest at King's College are earlier versions and differ from the text printed in German. King's P36 is a retyping of H2u in which TSE's holograph emendations have been incorporated. Therefore, the chronology is H2u, P36, Eliot Estate (21 pp.). Another copy of the address in the Eliot Estate archive (18 pp.) is probably an earlier draft than H2u and differs substantially from the other versions at King's and the Eliot Estate.

Shakespeares Verskunst[1]

Es gibt vielerlei Gesichtspunkte, unter denen man sich mit Shakespeares Dramen beschäftigen kann, und es gibt viele Fragen um Shakespeare, zu deren Erörterung so mancher andere Betrachter bessere wissenschaftliche Voraussetzungen mitbringt als ich. Nun ist zwar die Frage, die ich im Folgenden aufgreife, bisher wohl noch nicht in genau derselben Weise behandelt worden wie hier; dennoch meine ich, dass ich zuerst versuchen sollte, zu erklären, warum ich sie aufzugreifen wage. Ich glaube, dass diese Frage mehr den Dichter angeht als den Gelehrten, und zwar gerade den Dichter, der sich selber an Versdramen versucht hat. Man verstehe mich recht: Ich meine nicht etwa, dass nur derjenige das Recht hat, über Shakespeare zu sprechen, dem es gelungen ist, selber gute Dramen zu schreiben. Es auch nur vergebens versucht zu haben, bedeutet schon etwas – sich zu fragen, warum es nicht gelang, und die eine oder andere Ursache des Misslingens zu erkennen. Überdies habe ich mich, seit ich mich überhaupt für Dichtung interessierte, eifrig mit der dramatischen Dichtung Shakespeares und seiner Zeitgenossen beschäftigt und bin von ihr als Dichtung schlechthin sehr stark beeinflusst worden, lange bevor ich die Absicht hatte, ein Drama zu schreiben.

Innerhalb von fünfzig Jahren hat sich der Stil der dramatischen Dichtung im elisabethanischen Zeitalter erheblich gewandelt, und zwar hauptsächlich unter der Einwirkung Shakespeares. Darüber sind sich die meisten Beurteiler einig; aber wenn sie auch die Handlung, den Aufbau, die Charaktere oder den tieferen Sinn, den Shakespeare einem bestimmten Drama, einer bestimmten Figur gegeben hat, ausführlich besprechen, wenn sie auch die dichterisch wertvollsten Stellen aufzeigen, so gehen sie doch nur selten auf die Frage ein, inwiefern sich Shakespeares Dichtung und der Bau seiner Verse auf dem Wege von seinem ersten bis zu seinem letzten Drama gewandelt haben. Wir haben hier nicht einfach eine parallele Entwicklung des Versdichters und des Dramatikers vor uns; Shakespeare wurde vielmehr erst durch die Lösung dramaturgischer Probleme zum großen Versdichter.

Es ist üblich, Shakespeares dramatisches Schaffen im Ganzen gesehen in drei Perioden einzuteilen. In der ersten lernte er das Handwerksmäßige des Theaters, indem er, in Erfüllung kurzfristiger Aufträge, aus der Mode

gekommene Stücke und Fabeln, die man ihm zur Bearbeitung gab, bühnenfertig machte; in dieser Zeit arbeitete er mit anderen Bühnenschriftstellern zusammen. Es gibt aus diesem Zeitabschnitt etwa zwölf Stücke, von denen Shakespeare ganze Szenen oder Monologe geschrieben haben mag, und wir werden nie genau wissen, wie weit er an diesen Stücken beteiligt war. Andererseits gibt es in manchen ihm zugeschriebenen Theaterstücken Stellen, die vielleicht von anderen Bühnenautoren stammen, und die Suche nach den Urhebern und Bearbeitern der in diesem Zeitabschnitt entstandenen Dramen ist fast ein in sich abgeschlossenes Sondergebiet der Forschung, auf das viel Scharfsinn verwandt worden ist.

Auf dem Wege über einige der bedeutenderen Komödien gelangen wir dann zu der Periode der vollen Meisterschaft, in der Shakespeare seine vier großen und bekanntesten Tragödien schrieb: *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *König Lear* sowie eine fünfte Tragödie, die heute als ebenso bedeutend gilt: *Antonius und Cleopatra*.[2] In Bezug auf seine letzten Stücke geht die herrschende Meinung gewöhnlich entweder dahin, dass seine dichterische Kraft versagt habe – was im Zeitpunkt seines reifen Mannesalters kaum wahrscheinlich ist – oder dass er das Interesse verloren und statt dessen an allerlei Experimenten Freude gefunden habe. Diese späteren Stücke gelten gewöhnlich als weniger dramatisch, sie werden viel seltener aufgeführt und als allgemein schwächer betrachtet.

Diese Anschauung von Shakespeares Gesamtwerk teile ich nicht. Die Frühwerke sind natürlich, wie zu erwarten, weniger wertvoll. Wir müssen auch die persönlich-menschliche Entwicklung des Dichters in Betracht ziehen. So ist zum Beispiel *König Lear* schon deshalb eine aufwühlendere und schrecklichere Tragödie als *Romeo und Julia*, weil sie das Werk eines reifen Mannes ist; eines Mannes, der weit mehr Erfahrung besitzt und Zeit gehabt hat, diese Erfahrung zu verarbeiten und zu klären.[3] *Romeo und Julia* ist das Werk eines jungen Menschen; aber das gibt uns nicht das Recht zu behaupten, dass es kein großes Drama sei. Ebenso wenig wie ich der Anschauung zustimmen kann, dass man lyrische Dichtung am besten als junger Mensch schreibt, kann ich denen recht geben, die der Meinung sind, dass man ein großes Drama erst im reiferen Alter schreiben kann. Ein Dichter muss das Bild gestalten, das seiner Altersstufe entspricht: Wenn er jung ist, wird er anders schreiben als im Alter, und Shakespeares letzte Dramen waren eben die Dramen eines Mannes von über fünfzig Jahren, der aus all seinen Erfahrungen schöpfte. Ich denke deshalb an Shakespeares Werk wie an etwas Ganzes und nicht an einzelne Teile von unterschiedlichem Wert.

Was nun allerdings Shakespeares Wirkung auf der Bühne angeht, so besteht kein Zweifel darüber, dass in England und in anderen Ländern bestimmte Dramen stets erfolgreich gewesen sind, andere dagegen weniger Anklang fanden; dieser Tatsache müssen wir Rechnung tragen. Theaterstücke werden um der Aufführung willen geschrieben, und deshalb müssen diejenigen, die das Publikum anziehen, mindestens in einer Hinsicht gute Stücke sein. Ein Kritiker, der zu beweisen versuchte, dass *Hamlet* ein schlechtes Stück sei, würde kaum jemand überzeugen. Denn muss nicht ein Stück, das seit über dreihundert Jahren in England und vielen anderssprachigen Ländern beliebt ist, ein großes Drama sein?[4] Auf der anderen Seite aber haben Stücke wie *Richard II.* und *Richard III.* mehr Erfolg als *Troilus und Cressida* oder *Maß für Maß*, während meiner Ansicht nach kaum jemand behaupten würde, dass es ebenso große Dramen seien.[5]

Für die mehr oder weniger große Beliebtheit dieser Stücke besitzen wir, was die letzten dreihundert Jahre betrifft, keine genauen Belege; aber ich kann hier die Stücke aufzählen, die in unserer Zeit in England die beliebtesten gewesen sind. Ich meine damit diejenigen, die bei einigermaßen guter Besetzung und Inszenierung jederzeit ihr Publikum finden. Einige Fälle liegen besonders: Der *Kaufmann von Venedig* zum Beispiel verdankte meiner Ansicht nach seine Beliebtheit weitgehend der Tatsache, dass Sir Henry Irving gern den Shylock spielte und dass Irving ein sehr beliebter Schauspieler war. Durch ihn wurde die Rolle populär; und eine Zeitlang wurde das Stuck vielfach Schauspielern zuliebe auf den Spielplan gesetzt, die sich mit Irving messen wollten; jedenfalls wird es heute, glaube ich, nicht mehr so oft aufgeführt.[6] Ich würde also sagen, dass von den Tragödien *Hamlet*, *Romeo und Julia* und *Julius Cäsar* die erfolgreichsten Stücke sind; von den Komödien *Was ihr wollt*, *Ein Sommernachtstraum* und *Viel Lärm um nichts*.[7] Von den historischen Schauspielen kann man *Richard III.* und *Richard II.* hinzunehmen, von den Tragödien vielleicht auch noch *Othello* und *Macbeth*. Wenn wir nun auch darin übereinstimmen, dass Shakespeare keine größeren Dramen schrieb als diese Stücke, von denen jedes in seiner Art bedeutend ist, so glaube ich dennoch nicht, dass sich jemand zu der Behauptung versteigen könnte, *Romeo und Julia* sei in dichterischer oder dramatischer Hinsicht ein größeres Werk als *Antonius und Cleopatra*, oder *Julius Cäsar* sei größer als *Coriolan*: Denn die zuletzt genannten Stücke enthalten ebenso viel dichterische Schönheit, und ihr dramatischer Aufbau ist besser.[8]

Dass einige Stücke beliebter als andere sind, dafür lassen sich gewiss Gründe finden, die meist im Stoff liegen werden, nämlich darin, dass das

Publikum gern eine bestimmte Art von Charakteren und Situationen sieht. Dass Shakespeare aber manchmal Stoffe wählte, die bei der Mehrzahl der Menschen beliebt sind, und manchmal nicht, will noch nicht besagen, dass die volkstümlichen Stücke die besseren seien, auch nicht, dass sie etwa dramatischer seien. Es scheint jedoch vielfach die Vorstellung zu herrschen, dass die seltener aufgeführten Stücke nicht so gut wie die anderen sind. Auf einige trifft es tatsächlich zu, in den anderen Fällen handelt es sich einfach um Stücke, die für ein kleineres Publikum geschrieben sind.

Es könnte scheinen, dass diese Frage nach dem Verhältnis zwischen der Beliebtheit der shakespearischen Dramen und ihrer Bedeutung nichts mit meinem Gegenstand, mit der Entwicklung seiner Verskunst, zu tun hat. Mein Ziel ist jedoch, zweierlei aufzuzeigen: Erstens, dass die innere Notwendigkeit, die zu der Entwicklung seines Verses führte, im Wesen des Dramatischen liegt; zweitens, dass diese Entwicklung sich bis zum Schluss im Bereich des Dramatischen vollzog. Wenn man aber, wie das oft geschieht, zu der Meinung neigt, dass die späteren Stücke nicht besonders wertvoll, dass ihre Handlung fantastisch und ihre Charaktere unwirklich, ja dass sie in Wahrheit recht schlechte Theaterstücke seien, die nur hier und da einen Passus von hohem dichterischen Wert enthalten, dann wird man auch überzeugt sein, dass nach den berühmten Tragödien von einer dramatischen Entwicklung überhaupt nicht mehr die Rede ist, und ich müsste mein Vorhaben ganz und gar verfehlen.

Als Shakespeare zu dichten begann, war der Versbau der zeitgenössischen Dramen ebenso roh wie Handlung und Charakterzeichnung. Den ersten Blankvers, und zwar einen sehr guten Blankvers, schrieb Graf Surrey, doch war es kein dramatischer Vers.[9] Der große Anreger auf dem Gebiet der Versdichtung war Edmund Spenser, der eine äußerst verwickelte Strophe mit einer Meisterschaft handhabte, die danach niemals wieder erreicht wurde.[10] Aber Spensers großes Epos war ein Gedicht, zu dem eine kunstreiche Form und ein prunkvoller Stil großartig passten, während es für den Vers des Dramas auf Schlichtheit ankam. Die englische Sprache war auf jener Entwicklungsstufe gerade zu einer ausgesprochenen Literatursprache geworden, beladen mit neuen Wörtern fremden Ursprungs und mit alten englischen Wörtern, die einer älteren Entwicklungsstufe angemessen waren. Sie war beinahe zu wortreich. Der größte Versdramatiker vor Shakespeare war natürlich Christopher Marlowe, strenggenommen Shakespeares Zeitgenosse, doch hatte er seinen Stil schon entwickelt und seine Meisterwerke schon geschaffen, als Shakespeare noch ein Lernender war.

Es ist sehr aufschlussreich, Marlowe und Shakespeare miteinander zu vergleichen. Marlowe, kein sehr ehrenwerter Charakter, starb jung und hinterließ einige wenige Dramen, die heute selten aufgeführt werden, obwohl sie zu den Glanzstücken der englischen Dichtung gehören. Sein Genie entwickelte sich rasch: Selbst in seinen frühesten Dramen sind großartige Monologe und Dialoge enthalten, und sein einziges historisches Schauspiel, *Eduard II.*, lässt sich durchaus Shakespeares *Richard II.* an die Seite stellen.[11] Dennoch glaube ich nicht, dass er, wenn er länger gelebt hätte, über das jetzt von ihm vorliegende Werk hinausgewachsen wäre; unmittelbar nach seinem Tode aber würde man wohl gesagt haben, er sei ein größerer Dichter und Dramatiker als Shakespeare gewesen. Shakespeare begann seinen Weg langsam, doch er hatte jene den ganz großen Dichtern eigene Gabe, sich weit über das geistige Vermögen anderer Menschen hinaus zu entwickeln und zu vervollkommnen und sich niemals zu wiederholen. Jedes Drama Shakespeares ist ein neuer Versuch, etwas bisher noch nicht Vollbrachtes zu vollbringen. Es fragt sich nun, ob wir, wenn wir das frühe Schaffen Shakespeares mit dem Werk Marlowes vergleichen, einen Unterschied finden können, der die Erwartung rechtfertigt, dass Shakespeare über Marlowe hinausgehen würde.

Wir stellen bei Marlowe vielleicht eine gewisse Enge fest. Ich mochte damit sagen, dass er bestimmte Gegenstände mit überlegenem Können gestaltete, und zwar verhältnismäßig einfache, dabei sehr intensive Gemütsbewegungen, die sich für die Behandlung in erhabenem und rhetorischem Stil eignen. Shakespeare dagegen verstand es, weniger große Gegenstände auf eine Weise zu behandeln, die sehr bedeutsam werden sollte. Bei Marlowe ist dramatische Dichtung größtenteils Rede, bei Shakespeare wurde sie zum ersten Mal Gespräch. Er lernte allmählich Verse zu schreiben, in denen wir gewöhnliche Menschen sprechen hören, Verse, die zugleich Umgangssprache und große Dichtung sind. Das erste Beispiel dafür finden wir in dem historischen Schauspiel *König Johann*.[12] Es ist im Ganzen genommen kein sehr wertvolles Drama. Sein Aufbau ist unbeholfen, die Sprechweise zum großen Teil sehr gekünstelt und hochtrabend. Wenn eine Sprache sich in einem Entwicklungsstadium befindet, wie die englische zur Zeit des jungen Shakespeare, so strebt sie nach einem Stil und wird dazu neigen, zuerst einen übermäßig gefeilten und unorganischen Stil zu entwickeln. Der Weg geht vom Künstlichen zum Natürlichen. So findet man in *König Johann* Zeilen wie diese:

. . . in her eye I find
A wonder, or a wondrous miracle,
The shadow of myself form'd in her eye;
Which, being but the shadow of your son,
Becomes a sun and makes your son a shadow:

. . . Ich find' in ihrem Auge
Ein Wunder, das mich in Verwundrung setzt,
Den Schatten von mir selbst in ihrem Auge,
Der, da er nur der Schatten Eures Sohns,
Zur Sonne wird, und macht den Sohn zum Schatten.[13]

Diese geistreichen Umkehrungen, Wiederholungen, Wortspiele sind allzu gescheit: Noch nie hat ein Mensch solche Worte gesprochen, am wenigsten als Ausdruck der liebenden Zuneigung zu einer Frau. Und wenn er wirklich so spräche, ganz gleich in welcher geschichtlichen Epoche, würde niemand ihm glauben. Dramatische Figuren, die in dieser Art sprechen – und hier sprechen sie sehr häufig so –, sind also unwirklich und unlebendig. Doch gibt es eine Gestalt in diesem Stuck, die so natürlich, so ihrem Wesen gemäß spricht, dass sie geradezu revolutionär innerhalb der Geschichte der dramatischen Literatur wirkt: Philipp Faulconbridge, der Bastard. Er ist der illegitime Sohn Richards I., des Bruders von König Johann; als er in Anerkennung dieser Tatsache vom König in den Ritterstand erhoben wird, ist sein erstes Wort:

Well, now I can make any Joan a lady

Ich kann ein Gretchen nun zur Lady machen, [I.i.184]

– und dieser Zug natürlichen Humors – der Gedanke nämlich, dass er jetzt, als Sir Richard, jede beliebige Frau, die er heiratet, zu einer Lady Faulconbridge macht – steht unbedingt im Einklang mit der Natur dieses Mannes. Diese eine Figur lebt und lässt die übrigen Gestalten des Stückes nur um so unwirklicher erscheinen. Vielleicht war Shakespeare sich selber nicht klar all dessen bewusst, was sich hier anbahnte; denn Faulconbridge ist nicht etwa nur der Vorläufer lebenswahrer komischer Gestalten, sondern auch sehr bedeutender Charaktere. Indem er in einem Drama auftritt, das ihm an Wert nicht gemäß ist, scheint er der Zeit vorauszueilen; jedenfalls ist er der Vorläufer Jagos im *Othello*, aber auch des Timon von Athen, des Mark Anton, ja des König Lear, weil er wie ein wirklicher

Mensch spricht. Und er ist eine Gestalt, wie sie Marlowe nie hatte schaffen können.

Die nächste Entwicklungsphase erreicht in *Romeo und Julia* ihren Höhepunkt. Die beiden ersten Szenen dieses Stückes sind nicht gerade vielversprechend. Der Eingangsdialog zwischen den Dienern der beiden Familien hat dramatischen Wert, wenn sein Humor auch ziemlich roh ist. Die erste Szene ist verstechnisch den Historien nicht ganz ebenbürtig. Im zweiten Auftritt ist der Versbau dem von *Verlorene Liebesmüh* nur wenig überlegen; allerdings fragt man sich bei dieser Szene, ob Shakespeare den gekünstelten Stil nicht etwa absichtlich angewandt hat.[14] Vielleicht wollte er die Sprechweise des Romeo, der nur zu lieben wähnt, von der Sprache des zum ersten Male wirklich Liebenden unterscheiden. Erst mit dem Erscheinen von Julias Amme gewinnt die dichterische Sprache Leben. Die Amme leitet ihre Abkunft ebenfalls von Faulconbridge her: Sie ist eine starke, derbe, lebenswarme Persönlichkeit, geradezu und kraftvoll in ihrer Redeweise. Sie ist auch nicht die einzige Gestalt von so alltagsverbundenem Realismus. Der alte Capulet, Julias Vater, spricht ebenfalls eine schlichtmenschliche Sprache.

More light, ye knaves! and turn the tables up,
And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.
Ah! sirrah, this unlook'd-for sport comes well.
Nay, sit, nay, sit, good cousin Capulet:
For you and I are past our dancing days:
How long is't now since last yourself and I
Were in a mask?
– By'r Lady, thirty years.
– What, man! 'tis not so much, 'tis not so much.

Mehr Licht, ihr Schurken, und beiseit' die Tische!
Das Feuer weg! Das Zimmer ist zu heiß.
Ha, recht gelegen kommt der unverhoffte Spaß.
Na, setzt Euch, setzt Euch, Vetter Capulet!
Wir beide sind ja übers Tanzen hin.
Wie lang ist's jetzt wohl, seit wir uns zuletzt
In Larven steckten?
– Dreißig Jahr', mein Seel'.
– Wie, Mann? So lang noch nicht, so lang noch nicht.[15]

Ich betone immer wieder die Bedeutung dieser Ausdrucksweise; denn ich glaube, dass Shakespeares größte Dramen und ihre bedeutendsten Höhepunkte ohne diese Meisterschaft in der natürlichen Umgangssprache nicht zu denken wären. In dieser Meisterschaft übertraf Shakespeare alle englischen Dichter, die vor ihm und nach ihm Versdramen geschrieben haben.

Romeo und Julia ist besonders aufschlussreich, weil dieses Stück ein solches Gemisch verschiedener Stilarten ist. Ich weiß nicht, inwieweit die Steifheit des ersten Auftritts beabsichtigt ist. Auch für Mercutios berühmte lange Rede auf die Königin Mab und die Feen finde ich nicht leicht eine Erklärung. Sie ist dramaturgisch nicht notwendig, sie macht Mercutios Charakter noch rätselhafter, sie hält die Handlung auf, und doch ist sie ein literarisches Glanzstück, auf das wir nur ungern verzichten würden. Sie nimmt auf seltsame Weise Späteres vorweg: Eine Zeile beschwört die Stimmung des *Sturm* herauf ("True, I talk of dreams" – „Ja, von Träumen sprech' ich"),[16] und eine andere Zeile

Which is as thin of substance as the air

. . . die aus so dünnem Stoff als Luft besteht[17]

gibt einen Vorklang der Worte, die Horatio im *Hamlet* über den Geist sagt:

For it is, as the air, invulnerable.

Denn er ist unverwundbar wie die Luft.[18]

Diese Rede Mercutios verdeutlicht, wie Shakespeare dazu neigt, seine Bühnenwerke mit allem zu beladen, was sich im Rahmen der dramatischen Handlung nur unterbringen lässt, während Racine und die anderen französischen Tragiker alles fortlassen, was nicht unbedingt wesentlich ist.

Ein bedeutsames neues Moment, das für die Verskunst in *Romeo und Julia* charakteristisch ist, finden wir ferner in der Balkonszene und dem Dialog der Liebenden (II. Aufzug, 2. Auftritt). In Romeos ersten Worten ist noch eine gewisse Künstelei:

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

Ein Paar der schönsten Stern' am ganzen Himmel
Wird ausgesandt, und bittet Juliens Augen,
In ihren Kreisen unterdes zu funkeln.[19]

Denn ein Mann, der unten im Garten steht, würde selbst in einer sehr hellen Mondnacht die Augen des Mädchens oben auf dem Balkon kaum so strahlend aufleuchten sehen, dass jener Vergleich gerechtfertigt wäre. Aber vom Anfang dieser Szene an merkt man, dass sich eine musikalische Grundstruktur vorbereitet, in ihrer Art ebenso überraschend wie jene, die sich im Frühwerk Beethovens offenbart. Die Verteilung der musikalischen Elemente – Julia drei einzelne Zeilen, Romeo erst drei, dann vier, dann fünf, darauf Julias langer Passus – ist sehr beachtenswert. Man spürt, dass Julias Stimme in dieser Klangstruktur die Führung hat: Ihrer Stimme ist der Satz anvertraut, der das ganze Duett beherrscht.

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee
The more I have, for both are infinite.

So grenzenlos ist meine Huld, die Liebe
So tief ja wie das Meer. Je mehr ich gebe,
Je mehr auch hab' ich: beides ist unendlich . . ., [ll. 133-35]

und ihr ist das Leitwort „Blitz" in den Mund gelegt, das später im Drama wiederkehrt und die plötzlich und verhängnisvoll hereinbrechende Gewalt ihrer Leidenschaft kennzeichnet:

Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere one can say it lightens.

. . . gleicht allzusehr dem Blitz, der nicht mehr ist,
Noch eh' man sagen kann: es blitzt.[20]

In dieser Szene erreichte Shakespeare eine verskünstlerische Vollkommenheit, die für diese besondere Aufgabe weder er selbst noch irgendein anderer Dichter, eben weil sie vollkommen war, übertreffen konnte. An die Stelle der Steifheit, Künstelei und poetischen Ausschmückung seiner früheren Verse ist endgültig eine Sprache getreten, die zur natürlichen Umgangssprache vereinfacht und wiederum zu großer Dichtung erhöht worden ist, und zwar zu einer ihrem ganzen Wesen nach dramatischen Dichtung; denn die ganze Szene hat eine Struktur, zu der jede Zeile einen wesentlichen Teil beiträgt. Im *Hamlet* ist dieser Prozess der wechselseitigen Vereinfachung und Erhöhung noch weitergetrieben, und zwar an einem viel schwierigeren Stoffe. An diesem Punkt nun möchte ich mich noch

einmal der Frage der unterschiedlichen Beliebtheit von Shakespeares Dramen zuwenden.

Romeo und Julia und *Hamlet* sind wohl die beiden beliebtesten Tragödien. Der Grund dafür ist wohl, dass bis zu dem hier erreichten Punkt die breite Öffentlichkeit dem Dichter folgen kann. *Romeo und Julia* behandelt die erste starke Leidenschaft der Jugend, das heißt eine Leidenschaft, die jeder erlebt hat oder erlebt zu haben glaubt, oder von der jeder wünscht, sie erlebt zu haben. Das Drama drückt zugleich die Liebes- wie die Todessehnsucht aus. *Hamlet* handelt von viel verwickelteren inneren Kämpfen, aber noch immer von den Gefühlserlebnissen der Jugend oder des beginnenden Mannesalters: Es ist das Stück eines Mannes, der gerade die Schwelle zur Reife überschreitet. Jeder Mensch kann von Romeo oder Julia innerlich angesprochen werden, und jeder junge Mann, der überhaupt einmal eigene Gedanken und Empfindungen gehabt hat, fühlt eine gewisse Verwandtschaft mit Hamlet; über dieses Alter hinaus aber entwickeln sich überhaupt nur verhältnismäßig wenig Menschen. Je älter wir werden, desto weniger Bühnengestalten finden wir, in die wir uns hineinversetzen können; wenn uns dann noch Charaktere fesseln, so geschieht es weniger, weil sie uns gleich zu sein scheinen, als weil es uns reizt, uns in eine Gestalt hineinzudenken, die sehr verschieden von uns sein mag. Wenige unter uns haben den Ehrgeiz eines Macbeth, den Wahnsinn eines Lear, den Hass eines Timon oder den Stolz eines Coriolan durchlebt; schon eher ist Othellos Eifersucht von einigen Menschen, wenn auch keineswegs von allen, durchlitten worden. Mit *Romeo und Julia* und *Hamlet* ist die äußerste Grenze bezeichnet, bis zu der die meisten Menschen sich entwickeln. Jedes der beiden Dramen ist ein vollendeter Ausdruck der Gefühle, die Shakespeare in dem Lebensalter, in dem er sie schrieb, kennen konnte; darum können wir nicht sagen, dass die späteren Dramen größer sind, sondern nur, dass ein Mensch, der sich über jene Grenze hinaus entwickelt hat, zwar die früheren Dramen weiter mit Gewinn ansehen kann, dass es aber über sie hinaus noch einen Erlebnisbereich gibt. Es scheint mir einem Naturgesetz zu entsprechen, dass ein Mann von der Art Shakespeares in einem Werk wie dem *Hamlet* einen Punkt erreicht, an dem sein Schaffen ein Maximum an Breiten- und Tiefenwirkung auf Fantasie und Gefühl der Menschen ausübt, und dass er von da ab wie ein Komet, der sich der Erde genähert hat und nun seine Bahn weiter verfolgt, allmählich sich dem Blick entzieht und in seine geheimnisvolle Eigensphäre entschwindet. Von *Hamlet*, jedenfalls aber von *Macbeth* ab verlangt Shakespeare allmählich immer mehr vom Zuschauer. Manche Stücke

können zwar, wenn sie gerade einer allgemein verbreiteten Stimmung entgegenkommen, sehr eindrucksvoll auf die Zuschauer wirken. So wurde *Troilus und Cressida* mit seinem bitteren Urteil über das öffentliche Leben ebenso wie der *Timon* mit seiner Grundstimmung der allgemeinen Enttäuschung in den dreißiger Jahren mehrere Male neu aufgeführt; unter gewissen Umständen kann sogar *Coriolan* ein breiteres Interesse hervorrufen.[21] Größtenteils aber sind diese und die noch späteren Dramen für ein kleines Publikum bestimmt, was durchaus nicht bedeutet, dass sie weniger groß oder weniger dramatisch sind, oder dass Shakespeare sich als Dichter und Dramatiker ebenso wie als Denker nicht weiterentwickelt hätte. Im Gegenteil: Wir haben uns nicht entwickelt. Man sagt, dass die Angehörigen gewisser primitiver Rassen mit ungefähr vierzehn Jahren geistig erwachsen sind und von diesem Zeitpunkt ab auf derselben Stufe stehenbleiben. Der durchschnittliche Kulturmensch steht, was das Erfassen künstlerischer und geistiger Werte betrifft, vielleicht bis zum Alter von etwa fünfundzwanzig oder dreißig Jahren in der Entwicklung, während ein Mensch wie Shakespeare bis zu einer höheren Altersgrenze fortschreitet; wenn er dann aufhört, sich zu wandeln und zu reifen, hört er auch zu schreiben auf.

Ich habe diese Frage so eingehend behandelt, weil man sonst meine Art, Shakespeares spätere Dramen zu betrachten, nicht verstehen würde. Denn meine These ist, dass es bei Shakespeare eine fortlaufende dramatische und verskünstlerische Entwicklung gibt, die bis zum Ende seines Schaffens reicht. Zunächst aber müssen wir – sogar in Bezug auf die Anpassung des Verses an die Umgangssprache und die Poetisierung der natürlichen Redeweise – eine Entwicklung feststellen, die über die beiden von mir behandelten Stücke *Romeo* und *Hamlet* hinausgeht. In *Antonius und Cleopatra* wird ein weiterer Höhepunkt erreicht. Es ist ein Drama für reife Schauspieler und für ein reifes Publikum. Denn weder auf der Bühne noch im Zuschauerraum können unreife Menschen zu den Gefühlen dieser beiden Liebenden zwischen Jugend und Alter Zugang gewinnen. Das Verhängnis, das über alternden Menschen schwebt, ist sehr verschieden von dem, das jungen Menschen droht und auf Romeo und Hamlet lastet. Infolge der für die Bedingungen der modernen Bühne ungünstigen Vielzahl von kurzen Szenen ist *Antonius und Cleopatra* kein leicht aufführbares Stück, auch ist der Rahmen, in den die Liebenden gestellt sind, vielleicht für das Verständnis der meisten Zuschauer etwas zu weit gespannt, es ist die Weltgeschichte selbst, die ihn bildet. Aber hier haben wir den Höhepunkt jener Entwicklung, die, wie wir sahen, mit der Gestalt und der Sprache

Faulconbridges in *König Johann* begann: Das Stück ist von einem Realismus, für den wie im wirklichen Leben das Erhabene und das Gemeine nur zwei Aspekte derselben Sache sind. Antonius und Cleopatra selbst sind zwei große heroische Gestalten und zugleich völlig würdelos. Kein anderer als Antonius wurde

> . . . reel the streets at noon and stand the buffet
> With knaves that smell of sweat
>
> Am hellen Tag die Stadt durchtaumeln, balgen
> Mit Schuften, schweißbetrieft . . .[22]

und Cleopatra würde, wenn sie in der rechten Stimmung ist,

> hop forty paces through the public street
>
> wohl vierzig Schritte durch die Straße hüpfen,[23]

während sie in anderer Stimmung zu sich selber sagen könnte, sie sei

> . . . commanded
> By such poor passions as the maid that milks
> And does the meanest chares.
>
> . . . untertan
> So armem Schmerz als jede Magd, die melkt
> Und niedern Hausdienst tut.[24]

Zug um Zug wird, teils in den eigenen Worten von Antonius und Cleopatra selber, teils in dem, was andere über sie sagen, uns diese Einheit von Größe, Grobschlächtigkeit und Gemeinheit vermittelt, zum Beispiel wenn der kühl berechnende Cäsar den wahnsinnigen Vorschlag des Antonius, den zwischen ihnen auszutragenden Handel durch einen Zweikampf Mann gegen Mann zu entscheiden, beantwortet, indem er ihm ausrichten lässt:

> . . . let the old ruffian know
> I have many other ways to die, meanwhile
> Laugh at his challenge.
>
> . . . Wiss' es, alter Raufer,
> Es gibt zum Tod noch andre Weg': indes
> Verlach' ich seinen Aufruf.[25]

Die Verssprache entspricht hier so vollkommen der Umgangssprache, dass sie gelegentlich mit Prosa durchsetzt werden kann, ohne dass es irgendwie stört. Im zweiten Auftritt des ersten Aufzuges redet Enobarbus in Prosa, während Antonius Worte spricht, die ebenso gut Prosa wie Poesie sein könnten, und der kurze Dialog, in welchem Antonius den Tod seiner Gattin mitteilt, kann ebenso aus Versen wie aus Prosa bestehen.

Fulvia is dead.
– Sir?
Fulvia is dead.
– Fulvia?
Dead.

Fulvia ist tot.
– Herr?
Fulvia ist tot.
– Fulvia?
Tot![26]

Es gibt nur zwei Stellen in diesem Drama, an denen Shakespeare von dieser Sprechweise abgeht, und beide Male verfolgt er damit einen bewussten Zweck. In dem einen Falle handelt es sich um den Passus, in dem Enobarbus die erste Zusammenkunft Cleopatras mit Antonius beschreibt und der ganz bewusst prunkvoll gehalten ist:

The barge she sat in, like a golden throne
Glowed on the waters . . .

Die Bark', in der sie saß, ein Feuerthron,
Brannt' auf dem Strom . . .[27]

Hier ist die Sprache so auffallend ungewöhnlich, dass sie uns fühlen lässt, wie der rauhe Krieger zu einem anderen Menschen wird, wenn er an die bezaubernde Schönheit der Königin denkt. Die andere Stelle finden wir in der Szene, in der die weltbeherrschenden Triumvirn auf dem Prunkschiff des Pompejus in Prosa sprechen und in der Lepidus sich würdelos betrinkt; und hier hat die gesucht prosaische Prosa ebenfalls einen sehr bezeichnenden Sinngehalt.[28] Aber das eigentlich Überragende an *Antonius und Cleopatra* ist, wie gesagt, dass das Heroische und das Niedrige in denselben Gestalten und in ein und derselben Lebensschau verschmelzen. Bei Marlowe hätten die Helden des Stückes ebenso erhaben erscheinen können; bei

Dryden, in seinem später über denselben Gegenstand geschriebenen Drama, ist es beinahe so. Aber nur Shakespeare konnte sie sowohl erhaben als auch mit allen ihren menschlichen Schwächen zeichnen; und ohne die menschlichen Schwächen würde es dieser Tragödie an Größe mangeln.[29] Shakespeares Überlegenheit jedoch beruht darauf, dass er in dichterischer Sprache zu sagen wusste, was niemand sonst in Prosa hätte sagen können. Dass er in seinen Versen die Alltagssprache weiterentwickelt und zu einer gehobenen Sprache macht, hebt seine dramatische Dichtung weit über alle Werke Marlowes oder Drydens hinaus.

Shakespeares Entwicklung kann nicht überzeugend dargestellt werden, ohne dass man alle Stücke in chronologischer Ordnung betrachtet und jeweils aufzeigt, welchen Platz das einzelne Drama innerhalb der Gesamtfolge einnimmt. Ich kann hier nur auf die Dramen eingehen, die sich als charakteristisch für besondere Höhepunkte in dieser Reihe auswählen lassen. *Antonius und Cleopatra* habe ich herausgegriffen, weil Shakespeare sich darin am stärksten als realistischer Dichter erweist. Die letzten Dramen sind schwieriger. Beim Lesen oder Anschauen von *Antonius und Cleopatra* können wir unser Staunen noch mit den Worten ausdrücken: „Ich hätte nie gedacht, dass sich so etwas in dichterischer Sprache sagen ließe". Bei den späteren Stücken könnte man sein Staunen eher in die Worte kleiden: „Ich hätte nie gedacht, dass sich dergleichen überhaupt sagen ließe!" Denn in den letzten Dramen – *Cymbeline*, *Wintermärchen*, *Perikles* und *Sturm* – hat Shakespeare den Realismus des alltäglichen Lebens aufgegeben, um einer dahinterliegenden Welt des Gefühls Wirklichkeit zu verleihen.[30] Er neigt daher dazu, die Handlung dieser Dramen in eine Art Märchen oder fantastischen Roman zu verwandeln und seine Charaktere so zu vereinfachen, dass sie zu Trägern einer emotionalen Wirklichkeit werden, deren sie sich selbst, als handelnde Personen, nicht bewusst sind. Die greifbare Welt wird in diesen späten Dramen zu einer Traumwelt, und tief bedeutsam ist die Rolle, die Traum und Vision in ihnen spielen.

> 'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen
> Tongue, and brain not: either both, or nothing:
> Or senseless speaking, or a speaking such
> As sense cannot untie.
>
> Noch immer Traum, wo nicht solch Zeug, wie Tolle
> Verstandlos plaudern: beides, oder nichts:

Entweder sinnlos Reden, oder solch Gerede,
Das Sinn nicht kann enträtseln.[31]

Der Vers sucht und entdeckt neue Möglichkeiten: Die früh geübte Kunst des Spielens mit der Sprache zeigt sich wieder, aber jetzt schenkt sie dem Wort einen viel feineren und tieferen Sinngehalt und zugleich eine reichere Musikalität:

. . . Nobly he yokes
A smiling with a sigh, as if the sigh
Was that it was, for not being such a smile:
The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly
From so divine a temple, to commix
With winds that sailors rail at.

. . . Wie lieblich paart er
Ein Lächeln mit dem Seufzer: als wenn seufzte
Der Seufzer, dass er nicht solch Lächeln war;
Als spottete das Lächeln jenes Seufzers,
Der aus so holdem Tempel flieht, um sich
Mit Sturm zu mischen, den der Seemann schilt.[32]

Eine solche Sprache zu verstehen, geht weit über das Fassungsvermögen des englischen Theaterpublikums, des heutigen wie des damaligen, hinaus. Und doch ist sie nicht weniger dramatisch; dramatisch allerdings in einer Welt, zu der wenige Zugang haben. Ähnlich verhält es sich mit den Charakteren: Nicht sie vermitteln uns das Verständnis des Stückes, wir verstehen die Charaktere erst aus dem Stück. Wollte man Perdita, Imogen, Miranda oder Marina mit der so lebenswarmen Julia oder Ophelia vergleichen,[33] wollte man sie ihnen gegenüber blass oder unwirklich nennen, so legte man einen falschen Maßstab an. Sie sind ebenso wirklich, wirklich allerdings in einer Welt, aus der gewisse Gemütsbewegungen herausdestilliert worden sind, um anderen, gewöhnlich unbemerkt bleibenden, Platz zu machen. Sie sind wirklich, aber in einer Welt, in der die Sprache beinahe schiere Musik ist und die Gefühle ausdrückt, die sonst nur musikalischen Menschen vertraut sind. In keinem Drama Shakespeares gibt es eine schönere Szene als den ersten Auftritt des fünften Akts im *Perikles*. Der alte König erkennt in der jungen Frau, die vor ihm steht, die Tochter, die er als ganz kleines Kind auf hoher See verloren zu haben glaubt, und

das Duett der beiden ist so vollendet wie das oben angeführte zwischen Romeo und Julia. Es verhält sich zu diesem Dialog etwa, wie sich Beethovens letzte Streichquartette zu seinen früheren verhalten:

I am a maid,
My lord, that ne'er before invited eyes,
But have been gaz'd on like a comet: she speaks,
My lord, that, may be, have endur'd a grief
Might equal yours, if both were justly weigh'd.

Ich bin ein Mädchen,
Das nie den Blick auf sich zu ziehn getrachtet,
Und doch kometengleich ward angestaunt.
Die zu Euch spricht, mein Fürst, hat Leid erduldet,
So schwer wie Eures wohl auf richt'ger Waage.[34]

Und Perikles antwortet seiner Tochter:

Now, blessing on thee! rise; thou art my child,
Give me fresh garments. Mine own, Helicanus;
She is not dead at Tarsus, as she should have been,
By savage Cleon;

Heil über dich! Steh auf, du bist mein Kind!
Gebt frisch Gewand! Mein Kind ist's, Helicanus!
Sie starb zu Tarsus nicht, wie es gewollt
Der wilde Cleon.[35]

So kehrt in diesen letzten Theaterstücken Shakespeares das Drama zu seinen Anfängen zurück; es wird zu einer Art religiöser Kulthandlung von jenseitigem Sinngehalt. Daher das Maskenspiel oder Traumbild von der Göttin, das in diesen letzten Dramen die Kulthandlung vertritt und nüchtern-sachlichen Kritikern Shakespeares so zu schaffen gemacht hat. Shakespeare gelangte zu diesem Punkt aus einer Art logischer Notwendigkeit, nachdem er in der dramatischen Dichtung alles getan hatte, was ein einzelner Mensch vermochte.

Was ich zu zeigen versucht habe, ist erstens: Shakespeare entwickelte seinen Vers zur höchsten Vollkommenheit um des Dramatischen willen und wurde gerade dadurch, dass er für die Bühne schrieb, ein großer Versdichter. Zweitens: Das Dramatische bleibt durchweg Ziel seines Schaffens, obwohl er zuletzt zu einer Form des Dramas gelangte, der keine Zuhörerschaft mehr

gerecht wird; seine Kraft ließ nicht nach, und bis zum Schluss verwirklichte er, was er sich als Aufgabe gestellt hatte. Endlich: Shakespeares Werk bildet ein geschlossenes Ganzes, und wir verstehen darum jedes einzelne Drama besser, wenn wir alle anderen kennen.[36†]

ORIGINAL ENGLISH TEXT[1]

There are a good many points of view from which Shakespeare plays can be studied, and there are many questions about Shakespeare which many other people can discuss more learnedly than I can. The question I shall take up now has not, I think, been studied in quite this way before: but still I think that I ought to try to explain first why I have dared to discuss it – and so must be, at the start, a little more personal than I shall be later. I believe that it is a problem for the poet rather than for the scholar, and for the poet who has tried to write dramatic poetry himself. I hasten to add, that I do not think that it is necessary to have succeeded in writing good plays to have the right to talk about Shakespeare: it is something even to have failed, to be interested to know why one has failed, and to understand some of the reasons. Furthermore, I have cared deeply for the dramatic poetry of Shakespeare and his contemporaries ever since I was interested in poetry at all, and it influenced me very much as poetry long before I wanted to write a play. The Elizabethan poetry of the drama, within the space of fifty years, changed its style a great deal – chiefly owing to Shakespeare. Most critics agree on this: but though they discuss at length the plots, the construction, the characters, and what Shakespeare meant by a particular play or character, and though they point out which are the greatest passages of poetry, they do not often make a special study of the ways in which his poetry and versification changed between his first play and his last. Not simply parallel development as poet and dramatist: in solving dramatic problems he became a great poet.

Now it is usual to divide Shakespeare's plays into, roughly, three periods. We think of the first period as that in which he was learning the craft of the theatre, in which he was adapting, at short notice, plays which had gone out of fashion, or plots given to him to work with: and in which he was working with other playwrights. There are, of course, a dozen plays of this period in which Shakespeare may have written speeches or whole scenes, and about his part in which we can never be sure: there are, in some of the plays which we call Shakespeare's, passages which may be by other writers. This question of who wrote what, in the plays of that time, is almost a special department of scholarship in itself, and a great deal of ingenuity has been spent

upon it. Then we come, through some of the greater comedies, to the period of full mastery, in which he wrote the four great tragedies which are the best known: *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *King Lear*, and the fifth tragedy which is considered nowadays to be equally great, *Antony and Cleopatra*.[2] The general opinion of his last plays has usually been, either that his powers were failing – which seems hardly likely, considering that he was still only a middle aged man – or that he had lost interest and was amusing himself by various experiments. These later plays are usually thought to be less dramatic, are much less often played, and are considered generally weaker.

Now I do not take this view. The earliest plays are of course inferior, as you would expect. We have to take into account also the development of a personality: we can say that *King Lear* is a more profound and terrible tragedy than *Romeo and Juliet*.[3] That is because it is the work of a mature man, a man with vastly more experience and a man who had had the time to digest and understand his experience. *Romeo and Juliet* is the play of a young man: but that does not justify us in saying that it is not such a great play. Just as I cannot agree with those who think that a man writes lyric poetry best when he is young, so I do not agree with those who think that a man must be middle aged before he can write a great play. A poet must express the vision of the age at which he is: when he is young he will write in one way and when he is older in another. Shakespeare's last plays were the plays of a man over fifty, with all his experience behind him. So I think of his work as a whole, rather than of parts of it as great and others as inferior.

But when it comes to Shakespeare on the stage, it is quite certain that some plays always have been more successful than others, both in England and everywhere else: and we have to take account of this. Plays are written to be performed, and those which draw audiences must be, in some respect, the good plays. The critic who set out to prove that *Hamlet* is a bad play would not be likely to convince anybody. How could a play which has been popular for three hundred years and more, both in England and in many other languages, be anything but a great play?[4] But on the other hand, plays like *Richard II* and *Richard III* are more successful than *Troilus and Cressida* or *Measure for Measure*: but I do not think that anyone would say that they were as great plays.[5]

I have not examined the evidence for the relative popularity of these plays throughout the last three hundred years, but I should say that the most popular plays, in our own time, in England, have been the following. By the most popular I mean those which, with a fairly good cast and fairly good

production, constantly draw a good audience. There are some special cases. The popularity of *The Merchant of Venice*, for instance, was I think largely due to the fact that Sir Henry Irving liked to play the part of Shylock, and Sir Henry Irving was a very popular actor. He made that part popular, and for a time the play was often put on for actors who wished to rival Irving: I do not think that it is so much played today.[6] So I should say that *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Julius Caesar* were the most successful tragedies: *Twelfth Night*, *Midsummer Night's Dream,* and *Much Ado About Nothing* among the comedies.[7] We may add *Richard III* and *Richard II* from the historical plays. I am not sure are that I ought not to include *Othello* and *Macbeth* among the tragedies. Now even if we agree that Shakespeare wrote no plays greater than these, each in its kind, I do not think that anyone could go so far as to say that *Romeo and Juliet* is a greater play, either poetically or dramatically, than *Antony and Cleopatra*, or that *Julius Caesar* is a greater play than *Coriolanus*: for there is quite as fine poetry in the latter, and a better dramatic construction.[8]

I think that I could find reasons, both for the popularity of some plays and the lesser popularity of others, and they would have to do with subject matter, with the kind of characters and with the kind of situations that people like. But the fact that Shakespeare sometimes chose subjects and characters that the majority of people like, and sometimes did not, does not mean that the popular plays are any better plays: it does not mean that they are any more dramatic. There is somehow a notion, however, that the plays which are less often performed are not such good plays. Some of them are not: but as for others, the fact is that they are plays for a smaller public.

It might seem that this question of the relation of popularity to greatness, in Shakespeare's plays, has nothing to do with my subject, which is the development of his verse. But I aim to show, first, that it was dramatic necessity that led to the development of his verse: and second, that the development was a dramatic development right to the end. And if people believe, as they often do, that the later plays are not very good plays, that the plots are fantastic and the characters unreal: and that they are in fact rather bad plays which contain a few passages of great poetry, then they will believe that after writing the famous tragedies there is no dramatic development at all: and so my aim would not be realised.

The verse in which plays were being written, at the time when Shakespeare began, was as crude as the plot and characterisation of the plays themselves. The first blank verse, and very good it is of its kind, was written by the Earl

of Surrey: but it was not dramatic verse.[9] The great influence upon poetry was that of Edmund Spenser, who handled an extremely complicated stanza with a mastery which has never been equalled since.[10] But Spenser's great narrative poem was one to which an elaborate form, and a highly decorated style, was admirably suited: and what was needed for dramatic verse was simplicity. The English language, at that stage, had recently become highly literary: it was loaded with new words of foreign origin, and burdened with old English words appropriate to an earlier stage. It had almost too many words. The greatest poetic dramatist before Shakespeare was of course Christopher Marlowe. He was, in fact, contemporary: but he developed his style, and created his masterpieces, while Shakespeare was still a learner.

It is very interesting to compare Marlowe and Shakespeare. Marlowe, who was not a very respectable character, died young, leaving a small number of plays which are now seldom performed, though they are among the glories of English poetry. His genius developed quickly: even in his earliest plays there are great speeches: he wrote one historical play, *Edward II*, which can stand comparison with Shakespeare's *Richard II*.[11] But I do not think that if he had lived, he would have surpassed the work that he has left: yet at the time of his death, I think that one would have said that he was a greater poet and dramatist than Shakespeare. Shakespeare started slowly, but he had that gift of the very great writer, the gift of being able to improve and to develop far beyond the scope of other men: and the gift of never doing the same thing twice. Every play of Shakespeare is a new experiment in doing something that had not been done before. Now what difference can we find, in the early work of Shakespeare compared to that of Marlowe, which would give reason to expect that Shakespeare would go farther?

We may notice, in Marlowe, a lack of range. I mean that he could do a few things supremely well: rather simple emotions of great intensity, lending themselves to grand and oratorical treatment. But Shakespeare had a gift for dealing with smaller things, which was to become very important. With Marlowe, dramatic poetry is for the most part speeches: with Shakespeare it becomes for the first time conversation. He learned, gradually, to write poetry in which we can hear ordinary human beings talking: at the same time ordinary conversation and great poetry. The first significant evidence of this occurs in the historical play called *King John*.[12] It is not, as a whole, a very good play. The construction is poor, and a great deal of the speech is very artificial and pompous. A language at the stage at which

Shakespeare found it, is endeavouring to form a style: and the first style that it forms is apt to be an elaborate and mechanical one: the process is from artificiality to naturalness. Thus, in *King John*, you find lines like this:

> In her eye I find
> A wonder, or a wondrous miracle,
> The shadow of myself formed in her eye;
> Which, being but the shadow of your son,
> Becomes a sun and makes your son a shadow.[13]

These ingenious twists, repetitions, and puns are too clever: nobody ever talked like that, especially in pretending to express an affectionate feeling about a lady. If anyone did talk like that, at any period of history, nobody would believe him. So the characters, when they talk like this, and they talk like this a great deal of the time, are unreal and lifeless. But there is one character in this play who talks so naturally, so true to character, that he is a revolutionary figure in drama: it is the Bastard, Richard Fauconbridge. When Fauconbridge is knighted by King John, in recognition of his being the illegitimate son of his brother Richard I, his first remark is:

> Well, now can I make any Joan a lady [I.i.184]

and this touch of natural humour – the idea that now he is Sir Richard, any woman he chooses to marry will be Lady Fauconbridge – is absolutely true to the nature of the man. This one character lives, and makes the other characters in the play all the more unreal. Perhaps Shakespeare himself was not wholly aware of all that this would lead to: for Fauconbridge is not simply the forerunner of vivid comic characters, but of very important characters too. He appears ahead of time, in a play not good enough for him. But he is the forerunner of Iago in *Othello*, even of Timon of Athens, of Mark Antony, even of King Lear: for he talks like a human being. And he is a figure whom Marlowe could never have created.

The next stage in development comes to perfection in *Romeo and Juliet*. The first two scenes of this play are unpromising. The opening dialogue of the servants of the two families has dramatic value, though the humour is pretty crude. The verse of the first scene is not quite up to the level of the chronicle plays: that of the second not much superior to *Love's Labour's Lost*:[14] yet one wonders whether, in this scene, Shakespeare was not writing in this artificial style deliberately, in order to mark the difference between

the way Romeo talked when he merely thought himself in love, and the way he talks when he first experiences the real thing. It is only with the appearance of Juliet's Nurse that the poetry begins to come to life. The Nurse also is in the line of descent from Fauconbridge: a great, gross, vital human personality, direct and vigorous in speech. Nor is she the only character with this everyday reality: old Capulet, Juliet's father, talks in common human language too.

> More light, you knaves; and turn the tables up,
> And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.
> Ah, sirrah, this unlook'd-for sport comes well.
> Nay, sit, nay, sit, good cousin Capulet;
> For you and I are past our dancing days;
> How long is't now since last yourself and I
> Were in a mask?
> – By'r lady, thirty years.
> – What, man! 'Tis not so much, 'tis not so much.[15]

I insist upon the importance of this kind of speech, because I think that Shakespeare's mastery of it is something without which his greatest plays and highest dramatic moments would not be what they are. It is something in which Shakespeare excelled all other English poetic dramatists, before and after him.

Romeo and Juliet is peculiarly interesting because it is such a mixture of styles. How far the stiffness of the first scene is intentional I am not sure. And for the famous long tirade by Mercutio, about Queen Mab and fairies, I do not find it easy to account. It is not necessary dramatically, it only makes Mercutio's character more puzzling, it holds up the action, and yet it is a brilliant piece of writing which we should be sorry to omit. It has some curious anticipations: one line suggests the mood of *The Tempest* ("True, I talk of dreams")[16] and another line

> Which is as thin of substance as the air[17]

foreshadows the words of Horatio in *Hamlet*, speaking of the ghost:

> For it is, as the air, invulnerable.[18]

This speech of Mercutio illustrates the tendency of Shakespeare to load his plays with all that the dramatic action will bear, compared to the practice of Racine and French tragedy of omitting everything that is not essential.

The next great novelty in the verse of *Romeo and Juliet* is the balcony scene between the lovers: Act II, scene ii. In Romeo's beginning there is still some artificiality:

> Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
> Having some business, do entreat her eyes
> To twinkle in their spheres till she return.[19]

For it seems unlikely that a man standing below in the garden, even on a very bright moonlight night, would see the eyes of the lady above flashing so brilliantly as to justify such a comparison. Yet one is aware, from the beginning of this scene, that there is a musical pattern coming, as surprising in its kind as that in the early work of Beethoven. The arrangement of voices: Juliet has three single lines, against Romeo's three, four and five, followed by her longer speech – is very remarkable. In this pattern, one feels that it is Juliet's voice that has the leading part: to her voice is assigned the dominant phrase of the whole duet

> My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
> My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
> The more I have, for both are infinite. [ll. 133-35]

and to Juliet is given the key-word "lightning," which occurs again in the play, and is significant of the sudden and disastrous power of her passion, when she says

> 'Tis like the lightning, which doth cease to be
> Ere one can any "It lightens."[20]

In this scene Shakespeare achieves a perfection of verse which, being perfection, neither he nor anyone else could excel – for the particular purpose. The stiffness, the artificiality, the poetic decoration, of his early verse has finally given place to a simplification to the language of natural speech, and this language of conversation again raised to great poetry, and to great poetry which is essentially dramatic: for the scene has a structure of which each line is an essential part. In *Hamlet* this process is carried farther, and in dealing with much more difficult material. At this point, however, I wish to return to the point of the relative popularity of Shakespeare's plays. *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* are, I think, the two most popular tragedies. The reason, I believe, is that up to this point a very large public could follow him. *Romeo and Juliet* is concerned with the first intense passion of youth: with a passion,

that is, which everyone has experienced, or thinks that he has experienced, or wishes that he had experienced. It voices, both the love of love, and the love of death. *Hamlet* is concerned with much more complex agonies, but still with the emotions of youth or early maturity: it is the play of a man just entering upon maturity. Every man or woman can respond to Romeo or to Juliet, every young man who has thought and felt at all feels some kinship with Hamlet: but beyond this age, only a smaller number of people develop at all. As we grow older, we find fewer characters on the stage with which we can identify ourselves: and the interest is less in characters because they seem like ourselves, and is more in an understanding of characters who may be very different. Few of us have experienced the ambition of Macbeth, the madness of Lear, the hatred of Timon or the pride of Coriolanus: a larger number, but not all, have undergone the jealousy of Othello. *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* represent the limit to which most people continue to grow up. Each is a perfect expression of the emotions which Shakespeare could know at the age when he wrote it: and for that reason we cannot say that the later plays are greater: we can only say that while people who have gone on growing can continue to enjoy these earlier plays, there is a further range of experience beyond them. It seems to me to correspond to some law of nature, that the work of a man like Shakespeare should reach, as in *Hamlet*, a point at which it touches the imagination and feeling of the maximum number of people to the greatest possible depth: and that thereafter, like a comet which has approached the earth and continued on its course, he should gradually recede from view and disappear into his private mystery. After *Hamlet*, certainly after *Macbeth*, Shakespeare comes to demand more and more of the audience. There are plays which, in a very interesting way, may have an appeal to audiences at a moment when they respond to a general mood: in the 1930s *Troilus and Cressida*, with its bitter view of public affairs, and *Timon* with its mood of disillusion, were revived several times: in some circumstances, even *Coriolanus* may arouse a wider interest.[21] But for the most part, these, and the other still later plays, are plays for a small public. And that does not mean that they are less great, or less dramatic, or that Shakespeare did not continue to develop both as poet and as dramatist and as thinker. On the contrary, it is we who do not develop. The people of some primitive races are said to become mentally adult at about fourteen, and after that age remain the same: the average civilised person may develop, in his appreciation of art and thought, to the age of about twenty-five or

thirty: but a man like Shakespeare goes on to a further age, beyond which, if he ceases to change and mature, he ceases to write.

I have insisted upon this, to the point perhaps of becoming tiresome, because it is essential to the way in which I look at Shakespeare's later plays, and to the meaning of my title: for I mean that there is continuous dramatic and poetic development to the end. But first, even in the matter of adapting his verse to human speech, and making natural speech into poetry, there is development beyond the two plays – *Romeo* and *Hamlet* – which I have been discussing. A further triumph is reached in *Antony and Cleopatra*. This is a play for mature actors and for a mature audience: for neither on the stage nor in the audience can immature people enter into the feelings of these middle-aged lovers. The doom of age is very different from the doom of youth that was upon *Romeo* and *Hamlet*. It is not an easy play to produce, with its multitude of short scenes unsuitable to the conditions of the modern stage: and the setting in which the lovers are placed is perhaps too vast for most audiences to comprehend, for it is world-history. But it is I think the culminating point of the development which I said began with the character and language of Fauconbridge in *King John*: it has a realism in which, as in real life, the magnificent and the sordid are two aspects of the same thing. Antony and Cleopatra themselves are both grand heroic figures, and at the same time thoroughly undignified. It is the Antony who would

> reel the streets at noon and stand the buffet
> With knaves that smell of sweat[22]

and the Cleopatra who would, when in the mood

> Hop forty paces through the public street[23]

and who could, in another mood, say of herself that she was

> commanded
> By such poor passion as the maid that milks
> And does the meanest chares.[24]

By touch after touch, sometimes in the words of Antony and Cleopatra themselves, sometimes in what others say about them, is this unity of grandeur, grossness and meanness conveyed: as when the frigid, calculating Caesar sends word, in answer to Antony's mad proposal to settle their war by private duel

Let the old ruffian know
I have many other ways to die, meantime
Laugh at his challenge.[25]

The verse speech is so perfectly conversational that it can, on occasion, be interpolated with prose without any disturbance. In Act I sc. ii Enobarbus speaks in prose, Antony in what might be either, and the short dialogue in which Antony announces the death of his wife, is either verse or prose –

Fulvia is dead.
– Sir?
Fulvia is dead.
– Fulvia!
Dead.[26]

There are only two places in the play where Shakespeare departs from this mode: and in each the intention is deliberate. One is the speech in which Enobarbus describes the first meeting of Antony and Cleopatra, which is very deliberately grandiose –

The barge she sat in, like a golden throne
Glowed on the waters . . .[27]

and in which the language is so strikingly out of character as to make us feel that the rough soldier becomes another man when thinking of the fascination and beauty of the queen. The other is the scene on Pompey's barge, where the triumvirate who rule the world talk in prose, and Lepidus becomes disgracefully drunk: and here the studied prosiness of the prose has a very significant point too.[28] But the peculiar triumph of *Antony and Cleopatra*, as I have said, is due to the fusion of the heroic and the sordid in the same characters and into one view of life. Marlowe could have made them seem equally majestic: Dryden, in his later play on the same subject, nearly does so: only Shakespeare could make them both majestic and human in their weaknesses: and without the human weaknesses, we should not have the greatness of the tragedy.[29] And the reason is that Shakespeare learned how to say things in poetry which no one else could have said except in prose. The development, and the elevation, of common speech in his verse is what makes Shakespeare's play so much greater than anything by Marlowe or Dryden.

No view of the development of Shakespeare could be made convincing without taking up each play, in chronological order, and showing its place

in the whole sequence. But to do this would occupy the time of a whole series of lectures: I can only touch upon those plays which I can select as representing particularly important moments in the series. I have therefore taken *Antony and Cleopatra* as the furthest point to which Shakespeare went in the direction of realism. The last plays are more difficult. Our astonishment, in reading or hearing *Antony and Cleopatra*, might be expressed in the words: "I should never have thought that that could be said in poetry!" Our moments of astonishment, in the later plays, could better be expressed by the words: "I should never have thought that that could be said at all!" For in the last plays – *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Pericles* and *The Tempest* he has abandoned the realism of ordinary existence in order to make real a further world of emotion.[30] He tends, therefore, to change his plots to something like a fantastic romance or a fairy tale: to simplify his characters in order to make them vehicles for emotional realities of which they are not, as conscious actors, aware. The tangible world, in these later plays, becomes the world of a dream: and the use, in them, of vision and dream has a deep significance.

> 'Tis still a dream; or else such stuff as madmen
> Tongue, and brain not; either both, or nothing:
> Or senseless speaking, or a speaking such
> As sense cannot untie.[31]

The versification explores new possibilities: the early power of word play comes back, carrying much more subtle and profound meaning, as well as grander music:

> Nobly he yokes
> A smiling with a sigh, as if the sigh
> Was that it was, for not being such a smile;
> The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly
> From so divine a temple, to commix
> With winds that sailors rail at.[32]

Such language is far beyond the capacity of the English audience, even of his own time, to apprehend. Yet it is no less dramatic, only dramatic in a world to which few can penetrate. Similarly, we do not arrive at an understanding of the play through the characters, but of the characters through the play. To compare Perdita or Imogen or Miranda or Marina, with the very flesh and blood Juliet or Ophelia,[33] and to call them by comparison insipid

or unreal, is to apply a wrong standard. They are equally real, but real in a world from which some emotions have been refined away, so that others, ordinarily unnoticed, may take their place. They are real, but real in a world in which speech is nearly pure music, and where speech conveys those emotions which only musicians know. There is no finer scene, in any of all the plays, than Act V sc. i of *Pericles*. The old king recognises, in the young woman before him, the daughter whom he had thought lost at sea as a tiny child: the duet between them is as perfect as that of which I have spoken, between Romeo and Juliet: it bears something like the relation to that dialogue, that Beethoven's last quartets bear to his earlier music in the same kind:

> I am a maid,
> My lord, that ne'er before invited eyes,
> But have been gazed on like a comet: she speaks,
> My lord, that, may be, have endured a grief
> Might equal yours, if both were justly weighed.[34]

And Pericles answers his daughter

> Now, blessing on thee! rise; thou art my child.
> Give me fresh garments. Mine own, Helicanus:
> She is not dead at Tarsus, as she should have been,
> By savage Cleon.[35]

So, in these last plays of Shakespeare, the drama returns to its beginnings: it becomes a kind of religious ritual of otherworldly significance. Hence the masque or vision of the goddess which takes its place in these last plays, and which has so troubled matter-of-fact critics. Shakespeare comes to this point by a kind of logical necessity, having done all with the drama that one man could do.

My endeavour has been, first, to suggest that Shakespeare developed and perfected his verse for dramatic purposes, and that it was writing for the stage that made him a great poet. Second, that his purpose remains dramatic throughout, though he ends in a drama beyond any audience: that his powers remained unabated, and that to the end he did what he set out to do. Any, finally, that the work of Shakespeare forms one whole: so that we understand each play better for knowing every other play. I am aware that I have not proved all this: but that, I am sure, is more than even a greater scholar or a profounder critic could do in the space of an hour.[36†]

NOTES

1. As printed in *Der Vers: Vier Essays*. Berlin and Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1952. Pp. 150, [1]; 51-79. The lecture "The Development of Shakespeare's Verse" was first delivered in two parts at Edinburgh University on 27-28 Oct 1937 and then at Bristol University on 2-3 Oct 1941 (5.531). It was then extensively revised and delivered in English in Hamburg on 30 or 31 Oct 1949, and elsewhere in Germany during TSE's three-week tour, as well as at the University of Wisconsin on 13 Nov 1950. The text was translated into German anonymously by Gerhard Hensel and published as "Shakespeares Verskunst" [Shakespeare's Versification], *Der Monat*, 2 (May 1950), [198]-207. It was reprinted with very minor revisions in a German collection of TSE's essays, *Der Vers: Vier Essays* (1952).

In his letter to John Palmer, editor of the *Sewanee Review*, TSE wrote on 14 Sept 1949: "There will be a lecture on Shakespeare's versification which I have already delivered in this country and which I don't want to print until I have expanded it." In his 1956 preface to *OPP*, TSE explained: "I wish that I could have found worthy of inclusion two lectures delivered at Edinburgh University before the War, on 'The Development of Shakespeare's Verse'; for what I was trying to say still seems to me worth saying. But the lectures struck me as badly written, and in need of thorough revision – a task to be deferred to some indefinite future" (8.225). The text was never published in English.

TSE's copy of George Pierce Baker's *The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), bearing his bookplate and signed and dated 1909, is in his library.

The spelling of the German translation has been modernized following the orthography reform of 1996 (revised in 2004 and 2006).

2. *Hamlet*, first performed 1600-01, first printed 1603; *Macbeth*, composed ca. 1606, first performed 1611, first printed in the First Folio of 1623; *Othello*, composed 1602, first performed 1604, first printed in quarto 1622; *King Lear*, composed 1605-06, first performed 1606, printed in quarto 1608; *Antony and Cleopatra*, composed ca. 1606-07, first performed 1607, first printed in the First Folio.

As TSE traces the development of Shakespeare's versification, the works discussed are here dated variously by composition, entry in the Stationers' Register, first performance, and first printing.

3. *Romeo and Juliet*, composed 1594-95, first printed in quarto 1597

4. TSE may be criticizing his own earlier assessment of *Hamlet* as a "failure," a view that he shared with J. M. Robertson in 1919 (2.128, n.21).

5. *Richard II*, composed ca. 1595, first printed 1597, first recorded performance 1601; *Richard III*, composed 1592-93, first printed 1597, first recorded performance 1600-01; *Troilus and Cressida*, entered in the Stationers' Register on 7 Feb 1603, first printed 1609; *Measure for Measure*, first performed 1604, printed in the First Folio.

6. *The Merchant of Venice*, composed ca. 1595-96, entered in the Stationers' Register 1598, printed in quarto 1600; first recorded performance 1605. Sir Henry Irving first produced *The Merchant of Venice* and played the role of Shylock at the Lyceum Theatre on 1 Nov 1879. The production ran for 250 performances and featured in Irving's repertoire until June 1905. In his London Letter of May 1921, TSE wrote: "I do not suggest that Jonson is comparable to Shakespeare. But we do not know Shakespeare; we only know Sir J. Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet, and Irving's Shylock, and so on" (2.342).

7. *Julius Caesar*, composed 1599, first performed 1600, first printed in the First Folio; *Twelfth Night*, composed ca. 1600-01, first performed 1602, first printed in the First Folio; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, composed 1594-95, entered in the Stationers' Register 1600, first printed in quarto 1600; *Much Ado about Nothing*, composed 1598, entered in the Stationers' Register 1600, first printed in quarto 1600.

8. *Coriolanus*, composed 1605-08, first printed in the First Folio

9. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, was among the first poets to use English blank verse in his translations from the Psalms and the *Aeneid*. TSE had included Surrey, Wyatt, and other contemporaries in the lecture on "non-dramatic" poetry for his 1918 Extension course on Elizabethan literature (1.755).

10. Originally used throughout the *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96), the Spenserian stanza consists of nine iambic lines: eight in pentameter and the last in hexameter, rhyming ABABBCBCC.

11. TSE also placed the two plays side by side in his Extension course on Elizabethan literature (1918): "Importance of the 'chronicle play.' Marlowe's *Edward II* compared with Shakespeare's *Richard II*" (1.755).

12. *King John*, composed ca. 1596, first performed 1596-97; first printed in the First Folio

13. II.i.496-500; *read*: "I do, my lord, and in her eye I find / A wonder," (Lewis to King Philip, in the hearing of the Bastard)

14. *Love's Labour's Lost*, composed ca. 1593-94, first performed 1597, first printed in quarto 1598

15. *Romeo and Juliet* I.v.29-36 (Capulet, talking with an old man of the Capulet family)

16. *Romeo and Juliet* I.iv.96 (Mercutio to Romeo)

17. *Romeo and Juliet* I.iv.99 (Mercutio to Romeo)

18. *Hamlet* I.i.145 (Marcellus to Bernardo and Horatio)

19. II.ii.15-17 (Romeo, to Juliet at her balcony window)

20. ll. 119-20; *read*: "Too like the lightning,"

21. *Troilus and Cressida* often enjoyed popularity in pre- and postwar periods: it was produced in Cambridge by the Marlowe Society in 1922, at the Old Vic in 1923, and was staged several times in the late 1930s. *Timon of Athens*, printed in the First Folio; the first recorded production was Thomas Shadwell's adaptation in 1678; modern revivals by William Bridges-Adams in 1928, Tyrone Guthrie in 1929, Walter Nugent Monck in 1935, and G. Wilson Knight in 1948.

22. I.iv.20-21 (Caesar to Lepidus)

23. II.ii.234 (Enobarbus to Agrippa: "I saw her once / Hop forty paces through the public street"). TSE previously quoted the lines in "Wilkie Collins and Dickens" (1927) (3.166).

24. IV.xv.73-75 (Cleopatra to Charmain and Iras)

25. IV.i.4-6 (Caesar to Macaenas)

26. ll. 162-66 (Antony to Enobarbus)

27. II.ii.196-97; *read*: "The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne, / Burned on the water." The opening of "A Game of Chess" is an allusion to these lines, to which TSE refers in his notes to *The Waste Land*: "The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne, / Glowed on the marble," (*CPP* 64 / *Poems1* 58).

28. Act II, scene vii (On board Pompey's galley, with Lepidus drunk, in the company of Pompey, Caesar, Antony, Agrippa, Mecaenas, Enobarbus, and Menas)

29. *All for Love; or, The World Well Lost* (1678), Dryden's version of the tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra. TSE defined it as "Dryden's best play" in "John Dryden" (1921) (2.357) and

compared it at some length with Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* in "Dryden the Dramatist" (1931) (4.275-78).

30. *Cymbeline*, composed ca. 1609-11, first performed 1611, first printed in the First Folio; *The Winter's Tale*, first performed 1611, printed in the First Folio; *Pericles*, first performed 1608-09, printed in quarto 1609; *The Tempest*, composed and performed 1611, first printed in the First Folio.

31. *Cymbeline* V.iv.145-48 (Posthumus, emerging from a sleep that has brought the vision of Jupiter, and after reading a book that contains the prophecy laid on him)

32. *Cymbeline* IV.ii.52-57 (Arviragus to Guiderius)

33. Heroines in *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*, *Pericles*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Hamlet*, respectively.

34. V.i.85-89 (Marina to Pericles)

35. V.i.213-16 (Pericles to Marina); TSE draws upon this recognition scene in his poem "Marina" (1930), in which his persona assumes the voice of Pericles. The line "Give me fresh garments. Mine own, Helicanus" is likely echoed in "Made this unknowing, half conscious, unknown, my own" (*CPP* 110 / *Poems1* 108).

36†. The last sentence, from "I am aware" to "an hour," is omitted in the German translation.

Speech for Les Grandes Conférences catholiques

Delivered on 4 Dec 1949 at Les Grandes Conférences catholiques, held annually in Brussels since 1931. The event is a venue for leading European intellectuals to meet and give speeches on religion, philosophy, science, politics, economics, art, and literature. Jean Demaret invited TSE to address the conference on 30 Nov 1948. TSE replied on 4 Jan 1949: "I must first express my appreciation of the signal compliment paid me by the Grandes Conférences Catholiques. I am very sensible of the honour and therefore am most anxious not to disappoint your intentions. It would incidentally, be a great pleasure to me to revisit Brussels, a capital which I have not visited since 1914." However, he added that he could not contemplate any departure from London until Oct. TSE sent Joseph Chiari the six-page typescript on 5 Oct with the request to have it translated into French. He traveled to Brussels on 2 Dec with Robert Speaight and was the guest of Baroness Lambert. He wrote again to Chiari on 6 Dec: "I can now assure you that the evening in Brussels was very successful, and I owe this in part to your help in translation."

To be your guest of honour, on an occasion such as this, must in itself be the cause of warm emotion. But my feelings of pride and gratification are mingled with others, more poignant and more confusing. This is my first visit to Brussels for a great many years. When two visits, at such a long interval from each other, are linked in the mind with events both public and personal; when they stand for important moments in one's own life, and at the same time coincide with important moments in the world's history, they take on a profound significance for the visitor. On the first occasion, a young and quite unknown American has just arrived in Europe, with the intention of pursuing some higher studies here, and returning to America to become, in time, a professor of philosophy. As it turned out, he was to remain in Europe for the rest of his life, and pursue very different activities from those which, at the age of twenty-five, he had designed for himself. However, he found himself on this continent, in early summer, before taking up residence at Oxford for the winter. He spent several days in Brussels; and the time of his visit – my only visit to Brussels until now – was in July, 1914.[1]

I do not propose to burden you further with personal revelations. I mention these facts only to suggest to you the tangle of thoughts and emotions which I now experience. Thirty-five years have passed; and I now stand before you, a very different person from what I expected to become, in a very different Europe from that which presented itself to the superficial gaze

of the young pilgrim. No one then alive, however astute, experienced and informed, could have foreseen more than a very little of the kind of convulsion and cataclysm that we were to undergo. Let me not take upon myself to pierce into the future, but confine my thoughts to the past and the present. Most of the changes on which we tend to fix our attention, seem to us changes for the worse; to disentangle the good from the bad, and direct our minds to the former, is very difficult for us. When I allow myself to think exclusively of worldly affairs I find myself in darkness; but in the attitude of the world towards the Christian Faith and the Church, I seem to see some change for the better.

This may seem to you at first surprising enough, and in contradiction of facts of which we are all well aware. It is an age of Christian trial and persecution, an age of martyrdom; not within modern history, it would seem, have the forces of opposition to the Faith been so strong. Yet the Faith in the past has been fortified by persecution, and at such times the grace of God has bestowed the greatest energies of resistance. But it is not of such high matters as these that I wish to speak. What I have in mind are such considerations as these: I am concerned here, not with the forces of positive opposition, but with the great inert mass of apathy which has existed in nominally Christian countries, and especially of the apathy, indifference and mild opposition of thinking non-Christians in such countries. Surely there is today a more general realization of the frailness of human civilisation, and of its ultimate dependence upon religion. Among Protestants, I think, there is a much wider admission of the truth that religion is not simply a matter of the temperament and taste of the individual, that it is not merely to do with each man's private life; but that it is a social reality, and that the security and progress of society depends upon it. Amongst those liberals who formerly believed that civilisation was firmly established, who believed that it would continue and progress independently of the Faith; those even who believed that Christianity was only a relic of an earlier, immature stage of society, these convictions have been very much weakened. It is amongst those who want to retain the worldly benefits of a civilisation formed by the Christian Faith, and who yet cannot accept the Christian Faith, that the confusion and bewilderment of mind is greatest. Yet I think that there is a growing respect for the Faith and the Church amongst those very people. I think in particular, and this is the point of my discourse, that there is a growing respect for Christian and Catholic literature – that is to say, a more respectful attention is paid to the work of writers who are themselves Christians and Catholics.

I remember, for instance, the period between 1924 and 1930, when the poems of the great Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins were first made accessible to the general public. The sensation was great, the influence upon young poets of that decade was considerable. But the appreciation expressed was almost wholly for the style of Hopkins, for the manner rather than the matter. In so far as English readers of poetry were interested in the content, it was only Hopkins's evocation of the beauties of the English rural landscape that impressed them. His style, which is an eccentric one, was I think rather overrated; or rather, people overrated those poems which in language and syntax, are the most eccentric. The fact that he was a priest, that he was a member of the Society of Jesus, that the religious meaning of his poems was of extreme importance to him, was passed over with a rather bad grace. I think that as the immediate influence of his style passes away, there is now greater attention paid to what he had to say; and that any future study of Hopkins will have to show greater understanding of his meaning, as well as a more critical attitude toward his style.[2]

The background of nineteenth century literature is now visible to us, as it was not to the actors who played their parts against it. It is the background of a Christian civilisation in decay. Some authors assumed that it was not civilisation that was decaying, but Christianity itself; and they did not all see that there was anything seriously wrong with the civilisation. Some were content to report, to depict the decay of society, without concerning themselves with its origins in the loss of faith. Such literature can have permanent value; because civilisation is always in decay, and the recording of decay is itself a warning. In the greatest of the literature of that age there will always be lessons for the future. But the material for such literature was gradually exhausted. This was followed on the one hand by the literature of optimism; by writers who, instead of depending on the great truths learned or revealed in the past, and the accumulated wisdom of humanity, busied themselves with new truths, with the prospect of a new world designed according to their own plans, a world expected to become an earthly paradise through the achievements of science. Emphasis upon the future produces literature as ephemeral as does nostalgia for the past. The future, indeed, has an inconvenient way of becoming part of the past, and such prophecies of the future are always being falsified by history. Thus the literature of optimism is followed by the literature of despair, of nihilism. And this too is of very transitory importance. There is only one state in which despair is timeless; the

despair of those still in this world who have fixed their affections on this world, and found themselves deceived, can end only in extinction. The literature of despair can aim at nothing but the cessation of literature itself, for the record of meaninglessness itself becomes meaningless.

Out of such an age a few great authors must survive. I am not thinking of lonely exceptions aloof from their age, but of those who, in representing their age, have done something to bring it to an end, to make clear to our eyes that it cannot go on. These have been men of greater energy, determination and consistency than others, men who could not stop until they had followed their chosen route to the bitter end. I am thinking at this moment of James Joyce and Paul Valéry. The case of Valéry is especially instructive: it is the history of Narcissus.[3] For Valéry, the outer world was vain, except so long as it continued to inspire curiosity; the spiritual world was vain; and through these disillusions Valéry also had the clarity and the courage to see that art for art's sake was vain. There was nothing left but to regard attentively one's own mind in the process of thinking. The result was literature of the mind, abstracted from the body and the spirit to the furthest possible degree; the nearest equivalent to the perfect vacuum, a terrifying mysticism of nothingness. A great writer, an heroic figure, Valéry: sacrificed, we might say, to provide a permanent warning to men. He went further along a certain route than any explorer has done, and leaves at the end his prose and verse to serve as a notice-board: THIS ROAD IS IMPASSABLE TO TRAFFIC.

I must put an end to such observations, which could be pursued endlessly. My point is to suggest that it should now be more evident that our literature, our art in general, has no permanent source of nourishment except in the Christian Faith. If I say that only in the Faith can we hope for creation in art, it is a very different thing from saying "if you want art you must embrace Christianity" – Christians are not made in that way! I am only stating what I believe to be a fact. I think that the world – or that part of humanity which thinks, feels and reads – is now better prepared for literature which offers a hope so different from worldly optimism, a hope springing from renunciation of this world, a hope inseparable from a despair so different from that of the nihilists. I was impressed, at the time when Mr. Graham Greene's recent novel "The Heart of the Matter" was being discussed, by the extent to which worldly people of literary taste but no religious background, are now prepared to take seriously the moral and theological problem involved.[4]

I present these thoughts, merely because they were brought to the surface of my mind by the invitation to speak on this occasion to this distinguished company. They are only by way of amplifying, and giving greater assurance of conviction and sincerity to, the ordinary poor words of thanks which are all that any of us can muster to express our appreciation directly. But I must say them: simply, I am very deeply touched by your reception, and I hope my remaining years will be fruitful enough for you to feel, in retrospect, that it was justified. My second visit to Brussels will be of no less significance to me than my first; and, so far as any public significance can be attached to it, one of far happier omen.[5†]

NOTES

1. TSE visited Brussels in mid-July 1914 and described it in a letter to Conrad Aiken of 19 July as "a large modern town, very likeable and no sights to see" (*L1* 46).

2. TSE discussed Hopkins's metrical innovations in *ASG* (5.36-37), and in "Tradition and the Practice of Poetry" (1936), he expressed a preference for Hopkins's content over his style: "I cannot rate Gerard Hopkins so highly as most of my English friends do; although I like what he has to say much better than many of them, I still am put off by the way he says it. It strikes me as artificial, even affected and strained; fundamentally his metric seems to me to belong to the age in which it was written" (5.307).

3. The myth of Narcissus recurs frequently in Valéry's poetry and prose, notably in the three poems "Narcisse parle" (1891), "Fragments du Narcisse" (1926), and *Cantate du Narcisse* (1939).

4. In Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), set in a remote outpost of the British colony of Sierra Leone, the devoutly Catholic protagonist, Henry Scobie, is torn between the love of his wife and of his mistress. He is duped into diamond smuggling by a corrupt Syrian merchant and gradually finds the moral squalor and futility of life intolerable. Unable to provide both women the happiness for which he feels responsible, he convinces himself that he can spare them further misery by taking his own life. Surrendering to despair, and believing that eternal damnation awaits him if he does it, he commits suicide. The reader is left to contemplate the moral and theological questions of Scobie's sacrificial action. Greene (1904-91), whom TSE described as "one of our best novelists" to Henri Fluchère on 9 Oct 1945, had spoken at Les Grandes Conférences catholiques the previous year.

5†. On the verso of the final leaf, TSE drafted in pencil his revision to the conclusion of the French version, which he wrote in ink on the TS prepared by Joseph Chiari: "et dans la mesure où j'aurai [*sic*] appris, pendant 35 années, le sens chrétien du mot bonheur, elle me présage un avenir plus heureux." *Trans*: And so far as I have learnt, during the past 35 years, the Christian meaning of the word happiness, it [the second visit] promises a happier future for me.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The six-page typescript, with TSE's holograph ink and pencil emendations, is in the Hayward Bequest (H21), King's College, as is the eight-page French translation by Joseph Chiari, as delivered, with ink and pencil corrections by TSE. Another copy of the French translation is in P21.

Introduction to *A Portrait of Michael Roberts*, eds. T. W. Eason and R. Hamilton

Chelsea: College of S. Mark & S. John, 1949. Pp. xii + 72; Introduction, x-xii.[1]

Michael Roberts was trained at the University of London and at Trinity College, Cambridge, in chemistry and mathematics.[2†] His scientific bent and training were supplemented and corrected by a philosophical cast of mind; by critical abilities of a very high order; and by an imaginative gift which expressed itself in poetry of a meditative type. Such a combination of powers is unusual; and among men of letters of his generation it was unique. His first notoriety was due to the volume *New Signatures*, a presentation of the poetry which was beginning to attract attention in the late nineteen-twenties; a book which seemed to promise him the place of expositor and interpreter of the poetry of his generation.[3] This book was followed in 1934 by *Critique of Poetry*, a collection of essays ranging between literary criticism, aesthetics and philosophy;[4] then by *The Modern Mind*, a more coherent and profound examination of the age;[5] by a study of T. E. Hulme, which remains essential to the bibliography of a man[6†] who occupied for his generation something like the place to which Roberts was entitled for his own;[7] and finally, in 1941, by *The Recovery of the West*, an important essay in moral and sociological criticism, in which he arrived at an explicit statement of his belief.

> [T]he need for a common faith persists [he wrote]; and the sceptics must more and more feel that no civilization can be firm unless it is built on an enduring faith as well as on sound ideas, and that for Western Europe there is no reputable and enduring faith except that of Christianity.[8]

A little earlier than *The Recovery of the West* appeared *Orion Marches*, which contains, I think, some of the best of his poems.[9] At the time of his death he was engaged in putting into order the notes he had made for another book of social criticism, pursuing[10†] the course of explanation undertaken in *The Recovery of the West*. The greater part of the book was in almost final shape, and is being prepared for publication by his widow.[11†]

The problem of earning a living, for a writer of Roberts's peculiar combination of gifts, is an insoluble one – that is to say, it is only solved, or

partially solved, by good luck: and Roberts was much too conscientious, scrupulous and responsible a man to receive those favours which fortune sometimes bestows capriciously upon the reckless. He had been a schoolmaster, and a very good one; perhaps too good a schoolmaster for his own good: this most exacting and exhausting of professions leaves little time and energy over, for those who have the ability to teach, and whose conscience demands of them, for their pupils,[12†] the best they have to give. For him, one both hoped and feared for preferment – foreseeing that he would serve too faithfully the machine of administrative work, with all its petty and exasperating detail. He would have been distinguished among educators, as the head of a great school; and those who appreciated his mind and sensibility would have deplored the waste. There was, relatively, less waste, when he was a master in Newcastle, and at the Mercers' School;[13†] during the war he was engaged in the foreign section of the B.B.C., and the waste was only that which many men, not of military age, felt obliged to contribute;[14] but his appointment at the end of the war to be the head of a London Training College – with the task of restoring, reviving, and administering under post-war conditions, an institution of broken continuity; the staffing, the selection of students; the problems of finance, of licences for repairs, the deficiency of charwomen – this appointment imposed burdens upon him which caused anxiety to all his friends.[15]

It cannot be my undertaking, in introducing this memoir,[16†] to expound and criticise Roberts's work book by book, or to estimate his place as philosopher, critic or poet. What is important at this moment is for one who had known him for twenty years[17†] to give some indication of the gap in the life of ideas in our time that his departure leaves. His books can afford to be judged later on their own merits: but to those who will not know the context of the decade within which they were written, they will not disclose all of his isolated superiority.[18] It might have been expected that his intellectual equipment, his balance of interests, his capability of appreciation and judgment, would have gained him a recognised place as spokesman and censor for his time; and that he should have exercised a powerful and beneficial influence upon his contemporaries. He understood their world; he had passed through phases of the same enthusiasms. But I do not think that most of his contemporaries[19†] in the decade before the war were in a mood to be led in the direction in which his thought was moving. Had he been chosen to a fellowship of a college, he might have formed the minds of younger men: though even in a college I fear that the committees, the boards and the

examinations would have devoured his time. But he was not a specialist; his interests were too wide for limitation to a particular pedagogical subject, and too well co-ordinated to be pursued independently of each other. He would have made an admirable editor of a review of ideas: indeed, had *The Criterion* continued, he was the only man junior to myself of whom I could think for the editorship: but as an editor also he would probably have too much subdued his original work to the interest of the periodical and its contributors. He remains, in any case, a rather lonely figure in his time: his ideas were not fashionable, nor are they sympathetic to any but a small minority even now. He had, exceptionally in his time, an aptitude for wisdom: I say "aptitude" because I think of wisdom as a steady movement in the direction of wisdom, rather than as an achieved condition. The recognition of wisdom is often more delayed than the recognition of striking original genius: wisdom is as uncommon as genius, and no more immediately popular. It may well be that the young men of the nineteen-fifties will find his mind more congenial; and *The Recovery of the West* will be as much to the point in 1951 as in 1941; there is, as I have said, one more book to appear;[20†] but I deeply regret that the younger generation will not have the benefit of the books he would have written had he lived, or of his presence among them.

T. S. ELIOT

TEXTUAL NOTE

NEW opened with this paragraph:

Michael Roberts contributed only two articles to *The New English Weekly* and those as long ago as 1932.[21] But he certainly knew many of those who have written for it; his work must be known to all of them, and to most of its readers. What is more important is that the nature of his interests, and the point of view which he came to adopt, were such as to render his work significant to all who support the policies of this paper. Hence his sudden and untimely death, in December, at the age of forty-six, calls for some immediate tribute and lament in these columns, pending the more judicial estimate and appreciation which will be arrived at later, through the concurrence and conflict of critical opinion.

NOTES

1. Published on 12 Dec 1949. First printed as an obituary article, "Views and Reviews: Michael Roberts," in the *NEW*, 34 (13 Jan 1949), 164. TSE sent the TS of the article to Philip Mairet on 27 Dec 1948, saying: "Correct as you think fit, and alter the first sentence to fit the facts" (Ransom); see textual note.

The poet, mathematician, and teacher Michael Roberts, a longtime friend of TSE and frequent reviewer for the *Criterion* in the 1930s, died of leukemia on 13 Dec 1948. He is now best remembered for his anthology *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* (1936). In his letter to John Betjeman of 18

Sept 1939, TSE defined Roberts as "quite one of the most important men to keep alive" during the war (Victoria).

2†. In *NEW*: "in Mathematics and physics."

Roberts attended King's College, London, on a scholarship to read chemistry from 1920 to 1922, and Trinity College, Cambridge, on an Exhibition in Natural Sciences to read mathematics from 1922 to 1925.

3. As the editor of *New Signatures: Poems by Several Hands* (1932) and *New Country: Prose and Poetry by the Authors of New Signatures* (1933), both printed by the Hogarth Press, Roberts gave a collective identity to the group of poets whose leading figures were W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and C. Day Lewis. Other poets in the collection included John Lehmann, Julian Bell, William Empson, and William Plomer.

4. The book contains essays on poetry and criticism and features appreciations of contemporary poets, such as TSE, Hart Crane, Allen Tate, William Empson, and W. H. Auden. According to TSE's blurb for Roberts's *The Modern Mind*, published by Faber in May 1937, Roberts "established himself as the most authoritative critic of contemporary poetry with his 'Critique of Poetry'" and deserved to be called "not only a philosophical poet, but a philosopher."

5. *The Modern Mind* was reviewed by George Every in the *Criterion* of Oct 1937. In the introduction, Roberts described it as "a study of some changes in the use of the English language; in particular, it traces the influence of material science on common speech, and it shows in turn the effects of these changes on our attitude to religion, poetry and science itself" (5).

6†. In *NEW*: "which remains the essential piece of bibliography for a man"

7. Roberts's essay "The Categories of T. E. Hulme," published in the *Criterion* of Apr 1932, was revised and included in *Critique of Poetry* (1934). In June 1936, TSE invited Roberts to write a critical study on Hulme, whose influential poetry and prose TSE discovered, reviewed, and taught in 1916-17 (1.511, 558), and in whose posthumous *Speculations* (1924) he saw "the forerunner of a new attitude of mind, which should be the twentieth-century mind, if the twentieth century is to have a mind of its own" (2.521). Roberts's book *T. E. Hulme* (Faber, 1938) examines Hulme's aesthetic, political, and theological thought; TSE read the typescript and wrote to Roberts on 13 Dec 1937: "I have read as much as I have had time to read up to the present moment, and like the book very much."

8. TSE quotes the concluding sentence to the chapter "The Need for Christian Doctrine" (London: Faber, 1941), 269. Starting from the feeling that "Western civilization is in decay," the purpose of *The Recovery of the West* is to "examine the apparent symptoms of decay, and to ask to what extent they are really marks of decadence, to what extent they are inseparable from our industrial civilization, and to what extent they spring from errors that can be corrected" (9).

9. The collection was published by Faber in Sept 1939 and includes "Chinghis Khan" ([55]-95), defined as "neither a poem nor a play, but an experiment intended for recital as in broadcasting" (57).

10†. In *NEW*: "which would have pursued"

11†. This sentence is not present in *NEW*.

Roberts had been at work on *The Estate of Man* from the fall of 1946 until within three months of his death. The book, which calls attention to the way in which the world's natural resources are being squandered, was edited by his wife, Janet Adam Smith, and published by Faber in 1951.

12†. In *NEW*: "for the benefit of their pupils,"

13†. In *NEW*: "when he was a master at the Merchant Tailors' School and in Newcastle;"

14. Roberts was senior physics master at the Royal Grammar School in Newcastle-upon-Tyne from 1925 to 1931, when he became senior mathematics master at Mercers' School in Holborn, London. In 1934, he returned to the Royal Grammar School in Newcastle to teach mathematics, physics, and sixth-form English. On 19 Sept 1939, TSE wrote to John Betjeman: "Michael Roberts, certainly, deserves something much more important than his present work" (Victoria). From 1941 to 1945, he worked for the BBC European Service in London, reporting on the reception of broadcasts to occupied countries and organizing broadcasts for the clandestine press.

15. From 1945 to 1948, Roberts was principal of the College of St. Mark and St. John in Chelsea, London, a Church of England teacher training college that was renowned for its academic excellence and commitment to teaching.

16†. In *NEW*: "It cannot be my undertaking here,"

17†. In *NEW*: "for one who knew him during some twenty years"

In the copy of the *NEW* article he gave to John Hayward, TSE underlined the two "some" in this sentence and put a cross in the margin (King's HC2.1.3[14]). TSE first met Roberts in 1931.

18. When TSE submitted the untitled typescript of his review of *Personae: The Collected Poems of Ezra Pound* (1926) to Marianne Moore for the *Dial*, he asked her to provide an appropriate title (3.324, n.1). She chose "Isolated Superiority," taking it from TSE's text: "I have suggested that Pound has great influence but no disciples. . . . What is curious is his complete and isolated superiority as a master of verse form" (3.321).

19†. In *NEW*: "contemporaries,"

20†. This sentence is not present in *NEW*.

21. Roberts contributed the following essays to the *NEW*: "Mr. Ezra Pound's Unpopularity" (5 May 1932, 67-69); and "Hart Crane" (19 May 1932, 113-14). His review of A. N. Whitehead's *Modes of Thought* appeared in the issue of 20 Apr 1939.

Address to the Publishers' Association

The Publishers' Association was founded in 1896 as the trade organization of British publishers. It had formerly been led by Geoffrey Faber as president (1939-41), whose influential leadership in the National Book League and in repealing a wartime tax on books gave the Faber firm a prominent voice in the association. TSE's address was written between 15 Dec 1949, following a meeting of the Arts Council of Great Britain, and 3 Jan 1950, the day before he departed on a six-week cruise to South Africa with the Fabers.

As I shall be out of England for the next two months, I feel impelled before leaving to address to the Publishers' Association some comments on the proposal, advanced by Mr. C. Day Lewis and under consideration by the Arts Council, that the latter should subsidise the publication of poetry. After the discussion held at the Arts Council rooms on the 15th December, it seems quite likely that a scheme will be put forward for the approval of the Publishers' Association: at any rate, no such scheme should be launched without the approval of the Publishers' Association. And I hope that the Publishers' Association will consider very seriously the implication of any such scheme, before its members agree to implement it.[1]

The proposals are made with a view to remedying, or at least mitigating, a situation of which we are all well aware. During the last two years, the sales of modern poetry (by which I mean first impressions of volumes of verse by living writers) have, after reaching during the later years of the War figures beyond anything experienced during the previous twenty years, fallen so low that there are hardly more than half a dozen poets on whose work the publisher can hope to make even a modest profit. Even in the case of some poets of established reputation, the publisher is satisfied if he does not lose; and volumes by younger poets, however good the quality, are certain to leave a deficit. Mr. Day Lewis's statement of the decline of sales, in his preliminary memorandum to the Arts Council, is, according to my experience, substantially correct with regard to the work of all but a small number of poets. The reasons for this decline – as of the sale of other types of book – are obscure and perhaps manifold. That the high cost of publication is a contributing factor is very likely: the poetry buying public is not a wealthy one; and the majority of people are perhaps less willing to reconcile themselves

to advanced prices, in the case of poetry books, than in the case of any other kind of merchandise. It is not Mr. Day Lewis's account of the situation that I wish to contest, but his suggestion for meeting it.

It is the fact that the publisher, however small the edition of a new book of verse, must expect to be left with a large part of the stock on his hands. Now, in the case of any other commodity, of which the supply was greatly in excess of the demand, no one would be likely to propose, as a solution of the merchant's problem, that the Government, or an institution subventioned by the Government, should provide money for increasing the supply of already overstocked goods. Why should such a Laputan suggestion be made in the single case of poetry?[2] I suggest that the concern felt is neither for the encouragement of the publisher nor for the education of the public; but that it is based upon the assumption that there is a considerable amount of excellent verse which does not now get published at all; and that promising young poets, who might otherwise become important poets, are stifled in obscurity, and either abandon the practice of their art or perish in despair.

The appeal, in my opinion, is a sentimental one, upon an assumption which is at most an exaggeration. During the last twenty-five years I have been examining manuscript verse week in and week out; and it is my belief that a very large proportion of the new verse produced has come my way. I do not think that my firm has ever rejected a volume submitted – and I may say that an author whose name is completely unknown gets the same consideration as anyone else – except for one of the following reasons:

1. The verse, though good of its kind, was of a kind more suitable to the list of some other firm or firms.
2. Every publisher must keep his poetry list within reasonable proportions. I do not mean merely that he must preserve its proportion to the numbers of titles of the other kinds of book in which he is interested; but that in the interest of his poets, as well as in his own interest, he must keep his poetry list within limits.
3. The verse did not seem to us worth publishing.

I imagine that those other firms which publish contemporary poetry, pursue much the same policy. If this is the case, it would not seem that any inducement can be offered, to those publishers who do publish poetry, to enlarge their list of poets.

The proposal of Mr. Day Lewis does not appear to have been worked out in detail. But it would seem that the Arts Council is to be provided with a Committee of Judges, and that publishers would be invited to submit to this Committee such volumes as they think worthy of publication. From time to time the Committee would grant a determined sum, for the purpose of securing publication for a worthy volume, which otherwise would be rejected by publishers on financial grounds.

Now, how is this subsidy to be applied? First, if it were to go to the author of the book, then it would be merely a Prize; and therefore there would be no reason for awarding it through the intermediary of his publisher, but rather the contrary: a prize publicly and directly awarded would more effectively increase the profit and prestige of both author and publisher. Second, it could be given to the publisher for defrayment, or partial defrayment, of the expenses of publication. But if the publisher believed that the book would be a credit to his list, and was not deterred by reasons 1 and 2 given above, he would prefer to publish it at his own expense. The award would be likely to influence him only in marginal cases; and, if I may say so, it might be more likely to interest those publishers not otherwise interested in poetry. Third, the money could be devoted to marketing the book at a lower price. But I do not see how any publisher could afford to publish some of his poetry books at a lower price than others, simply because these books had won the approval of a jury appointed by the Arts Council: for this would be injurious to the interest of the other authors on his poetry list.

I would also call attention to the possible dangers of putting so much power into the hands of a Committee, however judicious the selection, and however conscientious the conduct of the members. It would tend to give an excessive advantage to poetry of the type which the committee, or the more active members of the committee, happened to like. No committee, and no individual, is infallible. Any one who has had to read as much poetry as I have, over so many years, must have made mistakes both of commission and of omission: the merit of the system of private enterprise in publishing poetry is that what one publisher, perhaps for quite trivial reasons, may fail to recognise, will obtain recognition from another publisher; and that there is room for various tastes among various publishers, as there are certainly various tastes to be gratified among the reading public.

Finally, I should say that the real lack is of a buying public of sufficient size: let us say, a public such that any new volume by an unknown poet,

published under the imprint of a firm with some reputation for discrimination, could be expected to sell 1000 copies. I should say that at the present time any expansion of the number of poetry titles would be more likely to depress than to increase sales. I believe that the best available does get published; and that the problem is to find ways of selling what we already publish, before we accept assistance for the purpose of publishing more.

Finally, I should like the Publishers' Association to consider the general principle involved. When only contemporary verse is concerned, this issue may easily be overlooked. Those publishers who are not concerned with poetry, may let the matter go by default; those who are concerned with poetry, may be swayed by the sentimental appeal on behalf of the young authors of genius – who are presumed to exist, but whose names are not to be discovered – who are said to be on the point of extinction (this is a variant of the *mute inglorious Milton* myth).[3] I do not deny that there is a social problem of the poet: there always was and always will be. It is the problem of finding a way for the poet to earn his living, in such a way that he will have time and energy left for poetry: but it is not directly a problem for the publisher to solve.

The general question is this: is it wise for publishers to accept what is virtually a Government subsidy – provided by the tax-payer – for publishing books which they would not otherwise publish? Subvention is apt, in the end, to mean control. Other kinds of book, besides poetry, might come into the subsidy circle. It may be a long journey, but one taken by easy downhill steps, from the subsidising of poetry to the kind of control of publishing which is already realised in Moscow, Prague, and elsewhere.

I must add – what I should have made clear at the beginning – that while I have relied upon my twenty-four years' experience in publishing poetry, I am not writing as a representative of the firm with which I have been during that period of time associated: I am expressing only my individual opinions, as a publisher, as a writer of poetry, and as – in a modest sense – a patron of modern poetry. The prospect for the publication of poetry depends upon the continued existence of a number of firms – not one or two, but several – which regard the publication of verse as a public duty, and each of which exercises its independent judgment. As for the prospect of an audience for the poet, and a poetry market for the publisher, that depends upon conditions which do not come within the scope of this letter, because they do not come within the scope of Mr. Day Lewis's proposal.

NOTES

1. The Arts Council had encouraged member Cecil Day Lewis to produce and distribute copies of the memorandum for the meeting on 15 Dec, which TSE attended as a representative of the Publishers' Association. It was subsequently published in the *Spectator* of 6 Jan 1950 under the title "The Encouragement of Poetry" (6-7), in which Day Lewis describes the scheme "by which the Arts Council should be asked to subsidise poetry, as it does other forms of 'non-commercial art,' by an annual grant, through which publishers would be guaranteed against their loss (or a proportion of it) on a volume of new verse. A publisher receiving a MS. of verse of a standard which in normal times he would have accepted should be able to submit this to an independent board of judges set up by the Arts Council and the Publishers' Association. If his opinion of its merit were confirmed by the judges, a guarantee would follow. An annual grant of £2,000 would enable the publication of at least ten new books of verse" (6). On 20 June 1950, the secretary-general of the Arts Council, M. C. Glasgow, wrote to TSE: "When the basis of consultation was broadened and the interests of publishers and booksellers were consulted as well as poets, it became clear that such a plan would not meet with general approval and was accordingly dropped."

2. In the voyage to Laputa in *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift satirizes the impracticable, useless, and absurd suggestions of scientists in the Academy of Projectors in Lagado.

3. "Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest." Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," l. 59. TSE refers to the same line in *NTDC*, explaining: "This myth assumes that a great deal of first-rate ability – not merely ability, but genius – is being wasted for lack of education; or, alternatively, that if even one potential Milton has been suppressed in the course of centuries, from deprivation of formal teaching, it is still worth while to turn education topsy-turvy so that it may not happen again" (7.262).

Prefatory Note to the Spanish Edition of *Murder in the Cathedral*

Asesinato en la catedral, by T. S. Eliot; trans. Francisco de A. Carreres
Madrid: EPESA, 1949. Pp. 139; Prefatory Note, [25]-30.[1]

Se ha estimado conveniente que escribiese unas líneas a manera de prólogo para esta versión española de *Murder in the Cathedral*. Tal vez no estará fuera de lugar decir unas palabras acerca de la ocasión para la que fué concebida, y de las circunstancias que rodearon su composición hace ya once años.

En 1934 se me invitó a escribir una obra para el festival que anualmente celebran «Los Amigos de la Catedral de Cantorbery». Me pareció muy a propósito escoger como asunto algún hecho de la historia de dicha Catedral, centro tradicional de la Iglesia de Inglaterra. Y de toda esa historia no hay hechos más conocidos para un público inglés que el asesinato y canonización del Arzobispo Becket. Al escoger tal asunto, tenía, por consiguiente, las mismas ventajas de que gozara el poeta ático con su mito griego: la trama sería conocida por todos en sus líneas generales, siendo además el protagonista una figura de importancia simbólica. Porque Santo Tomás Becket es el santo más famoso de Inglaterra, y una peregrinación a su santuario fué el pretexto escogido por Chaucer, el padre de la poesía inglesa, para dar unidad a sus *Cuentos de Cantorbery*. Y la subsiguiente profanación del santuario por el Rey Enrique VIII (que predice uno de los Tentadores en la primera parte de mi obra) tiene para nosotros una significación tan grande como el martirio.[2]

Por consiguiente, mi trabajo se había de ceñir a presentar el hecho del asesinato lo más dramáticamente posible, ateniéndome a los datos que poseemos; pero entretegiéndolo con todos aquellos adornos que mi fantasía pudiera inventar. Para ello elegí un método lo más alejado posible del que el poeta Tennyson utilizara en su drama sobre el mismo asunto, *Becket*.[3] Tennyson mezcla tan íntimamente lo que se debe a su imaginación y fantasía con lo que es histórico, que llega a transformar el personaje real en una figura imaginaria. Yo traté de separar lo que se debía a mi imaginación de lo que estaba apoyado en documentos históricos de manera tan clara, que el público no pudiese confundir lo uno con lo otro. Por consiguiente, en la primera mitad de mi obra, tras de trazar una escena en la que se presenta la situación creada por la vuelta de Francia del Arzobispo, introduzco otra que,

como el público percibirá inmediatamente, es sólo producto de mi fantasía. En la segunda mitad, hasta el momento de la muerte del Arzobispo, he seguido lo más fielmente posible los documentos históricos, utilizando incluso las palabras en ellos contenidas, siendo sólo producto de mi imaginación aquello que no creí pudiese falsificar o desfigurar lo rigurosamente histórico. Pero cuando mis asesinos se dirigen en prosa al público, les hago emplear un lenguaje tan claramente moderno, que al auditorio no le cabrá la menor duda de que se hallan en presencia de un voluntario anacronismo. La única parte de la obra que se aparta de este plan es el sermón. Es sabido que Santo Tomás Becket predicó sobre este texto evangélico en el día de Navidad anterior a su muerte; pero el sermón no se conserva.[4] Es, por consiguiente, producto de mi propia invención: y como era imposible emplear el lenguaje que el Arzobispo hubiese hablado, modelé el estilo (aunque de manera muy libre) sobre el de los predicadores ingleses de fines del siglo XVI, para así mantener la impresión de lejanía de época.

No me atrevo a esperar que una obra sobre este asunto pueda tener el mismo interés para un público extranjero. Cuando yo la escribí ni tan siquiera podía sospechar que fuera a representarse en un escenario de Londres, y, por consiguiente, aún menos que llegara a traducirse. Pero habiendo tenido éxito en Francia bajo el título *Meurtre dans la Cathédrale*,[5] tal vez no sea demasiado arriesgado pensar que pueda tener cierto interés para España, donde, si el asunto es desconocido, el espíritu de la obra puede parecer familiar, y la forma quizá no semeje demasiado extraña.

T. S. ELIOT

Londres, Primer Domingo de Adviento, de 1946.

ORIGINAL ENGLISH TEXT[1]

It has been suggested that I should provide a preface to this Spanish translation of "Murder in the Cathedral." Perhaps it will not be amiss to say a word about the occasion for which the play was written, and the circumstances of its production eleven years ago.

I was invited, in 1934, to write a play for the annual Festival of the "Friends of Canterbury Cathedral." It seemed most suitable to take as the subject some event in the history of that cathedral – the traditional centre of the English Church; and in the whole of that history no events are better known to an English audience than those of the murder and canonisation of Archbishop Becket. In choosing this subject I had therefore the same advantage as the Attic dramatist with his Greek myth: the outlines of my

plot would be known to everyone, and the protagonist would be a figure of symbolic importance. For in England St. Thomas Becket is our most famous Saint; and a pilgrimage to his shrine was the occasion conceived by Chaucer, the father of English poetry, for uniting his *Canterbury Tales*. And the subsequent desecration of the shrine by King Henry VIII (predicted by one of the Tempters in the first part of my play) has for us a significance as great as the martyrdom.[2]

My task, therefore, was merely to present as dramatically as possible the event of the murder, so far as the facts are known, and embroider it with such imaginative and reflective decoration as I could invent. I chose to pursue a method as different as possible from that employed by the poet Tennyson in his play on the same subject, *Becket*.[3] Tennyson involves his own fancy and invention so closely with the history, as to convert an historical into an imaginary character. I wished to distinguish my own invention from my use of the historical records, so clearly that the audience should never confuse one with the other. In the first half of the play, therefore, after devising a scene in which the facts of the situation on the Archbishop's return from France are given, I introduce a scene which the audience will understand at once to be the product of my imagination. In the second half of the play, I have, up to the moment of the Archbishop's death, followed the historical records, and the words used as far as recorded, as closely as possible, and my only inventions are such as I believe do not falsify or distort history. But when my murderers address the audience in prose, I have given them so distinctly a modern manner of speech, that the audience can be in no doubt that they are in the presence of an intentional anachronism. The only part of the play which does not immediately reveal itself in this way is the sermon. It is known that St. Thomas Becket preached a sermon from this text on Christmas Day before his murder: but the sermon itself has not been preserved.[4] The sermon is therefore my own invention: and as it was impossible to employ the language in which the Archbishop would have spoken it, I modelled the style (with a good deal of freedom) on that of the English preachers of the end of the sixteenth century, so as to maintain an effect of remoteness of period.

I cannot hope that a play on this subject can have the same interest for a foreign audience. Indeed, when I wrote the play, I had no expectation of its appearing on the London stage: still less, therefore, did I imagine the possibility of translation. But as the play has met with some success in France, as *Meurtre dans la Cathédrale*,[5] I venture to hope that it may receive some

commendation in Spain: where, if the subject is unknown, the spirit of the play will seem familiar, and the form, perhaps, may not seem strange.

NOTES

1. The Mexican playwright Rodolfo Usigli, whose Spanish translation of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" printed in the Mexican journal *Poesía* in 1938 met with TSE's approval, wrote to him on 10 Apr 1946 proposing to undertake a Spanish translation of *Murder in the Cathedral*. TSE replied on 18 Apr: "I should very much like a translation of *Murder in the Cathedral* to be published in Spain. Can you establish contact with any good publisher in Spain? If we received an offer from a reputable firm for a translation to be made by yourself I should have no hesitation in accepting it." In the end, an agreement was reached in 1946 with Dr. Francisco de A. Carreres of the University of Valencia to translate the play into Spanish, with publication delayed until 1949.

TSE sent this "Prefatory Note" to Carreres on 1 Dec 1946. He wrote to him on 9 June 1949: "I received yesterday two copies of *Asesinato en la Catedral* which seems to me very nicely produced. I notice the list of errata which you have scrupulously included. I look forward to reading the introduction. Furthermore I must take this occasion for expressing my appreciation of all that you have done in getting this play published and produced and in promoting its reputation in Spain. I wish to thank you most gratefully." TSE's prefatory note is titled "Prólogo del autor para la edición española" [Author's Prologue for the Spanish Edition].

2. In 1538, King Henry VIII ordered the destruction of Becket's shrine and bones in Trinity Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral during the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

3. TSE wrote to Elsie Fogerty on 22 Nov 1934: "The subject of St Thomas of Canterbury has dramatic possibilities unexplored by Tennyson" (*L7* 387). Tennyson's verse drama *Becket* (1879) was first produced in 1893.

4. In his discussion of the Feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury, TSE explained in "Notes on the Way [I]" (1935): "I have discovered his Mass in a curious volume called *The English Missal* . . . The Introit is *Gaudeamus*, 'Rejoice we all in the Lord'; but I suspect that St. Thomas himself might have preferred to be remembered with the Introit for Boxing Day: *Sederunt principes*, 'Princes, moreover, did sit and did witness falsely against me'" (5.154).

5. Henri Fluchère's translation, *Meurtre dans la cathédrale*, was first published in France in 1943 and reprinted in 1944. Jean Vilar's production of the play premiered in Paris on 18 June 1945 at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier. TSE wrote to Frank Morley on 21 July 1945: "The production of *Meurtre dans la Cathédrale* at the Vieux Colombier was very good indeed: in respect of costume, and of chorus, much better than the London-Canterbury production; the total effect much more professional than Martin Browne's (Elsie Fogerty's) and Jean Vilar looking much more like a dominating ecclesiastic than Robert Speaight. An intelligent lot of people: and when it comes to matters of art, the French are the most thorough and precise people in the world" (Berg). Another edition was printed in the summer of 1946 by Éditions du Seuil.

Foreword to *Hali*, by G. V. Desani

London: Saturn Press, 1950. Pp. 57; Foreword, [7].[1]

I consider Mr. Desani's *Hali* a striking and unusual piece of work. It is a completely different sort of thing from his *Hatterr*,[2] and often the imagery is terrifyingly effective. It is, of course, as poetry that I take *Hali*.[3]

Hali is not likely to appeal quickly to the taste of many readers and yet, in general, I find myself in agreement with what Mr. Forster says.[4]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. "This is merely an extract from a letter and was not intended by T. S. Eliot for publication" (Gallup 180). After receiving the text of *Hali*, TSE wrote to the Indian writer and philosopher G. V. (Govindas Vishnoodas) Desani (1909-2000) on behalf of Faber to decline publication in a letter of 24 May 1949, from which Desani constructed the foreword, evidently without permission: "I have been wondering now what could be done about *Hali*. I have read it again and still consider it a striking and unusual piece of work. It is not likely to appeal quickly to the taste of many readers and yet, in general, I find myself in agreement with what Mr. E. M. Forster says in his letter to you of which you send the copy." TSE explains that the firm is "in a particularly bad period for poetry in general and can be quite certain of losing money on any volume we produce by a new, or not widely known, author. It is, of course, as poetry that I take *Hali* . . . We therefore have to confine ourselves to very little new verse and our programme is filled for some time to come. . . . I see that you would like me to introduce *Hali* but, alas, I never write introductions to volumes of verse except for very special reasons and in only two cases for volumes published by my own firm."

2. TSE wrote a previous testimonial, quoted in *Hali*, on the novel *All about H. Hatterr* (1948): "Certainly a remarkable book. In all my experience, I have not met with anything quite like it. It is amazing that anyone should be able to sustain a piece of work in this style and tempo at such length" (57).

3. The title page reads: "HALI A Play: The story of his Passion, and of his vision of Good and Evil and something beyond them both: told by his God RAHA, his mother MIRA, his dearly loved ROOH, the ominous spirit BHAVA, MAYA (who befriended him), the MAGICIAN, and himself" ([9]). The work is at once a mystical epic, a prose poem, and a poetic drama.

4. E. M. Forster's testimonial, taken from the letter copied by Desani to TSE, follows that of TSE in the foreword: "I have no inner knowledge of poetry, and so am diffident of my judgments on it, but *Hali* does strike me as genuine, personal, and passionate. I get a view through it, though I should find difficulty in describing what I see. It seems to treat life as if life were what death might be – perhaps that is the method in its wild pilgrimage, and why it keeps evoking heights above the '*Summit-City*' of normal achievement. It depends upon a private mythology – a dangerous device. Yet it succeeds in being emotionally intelligible and in creating overtones."

Response to the Toast at the Nobel Banquet[1]

M. ELIOT:

Your Royal Highnesses, Honoured members of the Swedish Academy, Ladies and Gentlemen!

When I began to think of what I should say to you this evening, I wished only to express very simply my appreciation of the high honour which the Swedish Academy has thought fit to confer upon me. But to do this adequately proved no simple task: my business is with words, yet the words were beyond my command. Merely to indicate that I was aware of having received the highest international honour that can be bestowed upon a man of letters, would be only to say what everyone knows already. To profess my own unworthiness would be to cast doubt upon the wisdom of the Academy; to praise the Academy might suggest that I, as a literary critic, approved the recognition given to myself as a poet. May I therefore ask that it be taken for granted, that I experienced, on learning of this award to myself, all the normal emotions of exaltation and vanity that any human being might be expected to feel at such a moment, with enjoyment of the flattery, and exasperation at the inconvenience, of being turned overnight into a public figure? Were the Nobel Award similar in kind to any other award, and merely higher in degree, I might still try to find words of appreciation: but since it is different in kind from any other, the expression of one's feelings calls for resources which language cannot supply.

I must therefore try to express myself in an indirect way, by putting before you my own interpretation of the significance of the Nobel Prize for Literature. If this were simply the recognition of merit, or of the fact that an author's reputation has passed the boundaries of his own country and his own language, we could say that hardly any one of us at any time is, more than others, worthy of being so distinguished. But I find in the Nobel Award something more and something different from such recognition. It seems to me more the election of an individual, chosen from time to time from one nation or another, and selected by something like an act of grace, to fill a peculiar role and to become a peculiar symbol. A ceremony takes place, by which a man is suddenly endowed with some function which he did not fill before. So the question is not whether he was worthy to be so singled

out, but whether he can perform the function which you have assigned to him: the function of serving as a representative, so far as any man can be, of something of far greater importance than the value of what he himself has written.

Poetry is usually considered the most local of all the arts. Painting, sculpture, architecture, music, can be enjoyed by all who see or hear. But language, especially the language of poetry, is a different matter. Poetry, it might seem, separates peoples instead of uniting them.

But on the other hand we must remember, that while language constitutes a barrier, poetry itself gives us a reason for trying to overcome the barrier. To enjoy poetry belonging to another language, is to enjoy an understanding of the people to whom that language belongs, an understanding we can get in no other way. We may think also, of the history of poetry in Europe, and of the great influence that the poetry of one language can exert on another; we must remember the immense debt of every considerable poet to poets of other languages than his own; we may reflect that the poetry of every country and every language would decline and perish, were it not nourished by poetry in foreign tongues. When a poet speaks to his own people, the voices of all the poets of other languages who have influenced him are speaking also. And at the same time he himself is speaking to younger poets of other languages, and these poets will convey something of *his* vision of life and something of the spirit of *his* people, to their own. Partly through his influence on other poets, partly through translation, which must be also a kind of re-creation of his poems by other poets, partly through readers of his language who are not themselves poets, the poet can contribute towards understanding between peoples.

In the work of every poet there will certainly be much that can only appeal to those who inhabit the same region, or speak the same language, as the poet. But nevertheless there is a meaning to the phrase "the poetry of Europe," and even to the word "poetry" the world over. I think that in poetry peoples of different countries and different languages – though it be apparently only through a small minority in any one country – acquire an understanding of each other which, however partial, is still essential. And I take the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature, when it is given to a poet, to be primarily an assertion of the supra-national value of poetry. To make that affirmation, it is necessary from time to time to designate a poet: and I stand before you, not on my own merits, but as a symbol, for a time, of the significance of poetry.

NOTES

1. As printed in *Les Prix Nobel en 1948*. Stockholm: Imprimerie Royale, P. A. Norstedt & Söner, 1949 [i.e., 1950]. Pp. 132; 56-58.

Published on 27 Feb 1950. TSE was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature 1948 "for his outstanding, pioneer contribution to present-day poetry." The Nobel Banquet took place in Stockholm on 10 Dec 1948. TSE described the event to his sister Marian Cushing Eliot in a letter of 18 Dec: "The King, owing to age and increasing infirmity, was absent, for the first time since the Nobel Prizes were founded. . . . He was replaced by the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess. There was a good deal of music from the band. A long discourse in Swedish, about the affairs of the Nobel Foundation, opened the ceremonies. Then each candidate was presented by his appropriate sponsor: a long speech about him in Swedish, followed by a shorter one in one's own language. I was the fourth. One rose, advanced, descended some steps, and was handed the diploma and the medal by the Crown Prince, with a few words, and then re-mounted the platform" (Houghton).

Thanksgiving Fund. Relations with the University

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (11 Apr 1950) 7[1]

Sir, – The Lord Mayor's appeal for a National Thanksgiving Fund provokes a question which does not seem to have yet been asked by any of your correspondents.[2]

I presume that the great majority of foreign and oversea students resident in London are registered in some department of London University; at all events, according to my information, some 3,000 students are enrolled there. For this reason I should have expected that any proposal, of such magnitude, in the interest of students in London would be framed only after consultation with the university authorities, and issued only with their explicit support. But, although the site for the new building or buildings is in the University of London area, I find in the text of the appeal no reference whatever to the university; and, although the name of the Earl of Athlone is given among those of the distinguished patrons of the appeal, the fact that he is Chancellor of that university is unmentioned.[3]

The question of the status of the university is all the more interesting, because the university has its own scheme, less widely publicized, for an international house and halls of residence for students of all countries. This project is said to have the promise of substantial financial support from the British Government, and to have the interest and approval of 30 Dominion, Commonwealth, and foreign Governments. Are these two ambitious schemes to be united or are they to compete with each other for financial support?[4]

No one would wish to quench the sentiment of gratitude of which the Lord Mayor's fund is to be the expression. But it seems a pity that any scheme for the benefit of students from abroad should discriminate in favour of those from countries from which many food parcels have come, as against those (individually, perhaps, equally meritorious) from countries from which – perhaps from no fault of their own – fewer or no food parcels have come. And many of the students in London whose claims upon us (food parcels apart) are strongest, and whose needs are the most pressing, are students of Asiatic and African races. Before we respond to an appeal for £1,650,000

– the sum called for in the Lord Mayor's announcement[5] – we should like to be assured that these students also will be welcome in the centre on the same terms as any others.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

T. S. ELIOT

24, Russell Square, W.C.1.

NOTES

1. Dated 6 Apr 1950 on CC

2. As reported in the *Times* of 22 Mar 1950, the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Frederick Rowland (1874-1959), announced the opening of a National Thanksgiving Fund to develop a residential center in Mecklenburgh Square, London, for overseas students. This was intended as a national expression of gratitude to friends in the British Commonwealth and United States for gifts of food supplies. "The main objective of the appeal," he stated, "is to benefit students from the Commonwealth oversea and the United States" (6). The appeal had prompted a series of letters for and against the residential center and the perceived architectural and cultural consequences.

3. Alexander Cambridge (1874-1957), 1st Earl of Athlone and a cousin of King George V, was Chancellor of the University of London from 1932 to 1955. On 25 Nov 1949, he bestowed on TSE an honorary degree from the University of London.

4. Douglas William Logan (1910-87), Principal of the University of London, answered TSE's question in the *Times* of 12 April: "It is not a University scheme, for it emanated in an approach in 1945 by the then High Commissioner for India to the then Chancellor of the Exchequer. The British Government have promised a substantial contribution, and plans are now being made for an approach to Commonwealth and foreign Governments for the remainder of the financial help needed" (7). The prime minister made it clear that for the National Thanksgiving Fund "no direct contribution of public money will be made" (HC Deb 28 March 1950 vol 473 c181).

5. The total sum requested by the Lord Mayor actually amounted to £2,000,000, including, "if funds permit," £150,000 for an existing residential establishment of oversea students in Scotland and £200,000 for "five big societies which do valuable work throughout the country for oversea students and visitors" (6).

Students from Oversea. Scope of the Lord Mayor's Fund

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (17 April 1950) 5[1]

Sir, – The letter from the Principal of the University of London in *The Times* of April 12 is very informative.[2] But the answers which he gives are, with one exception, answers to questions which I did not ask. Let me deal briefly with the exception first. The Principal tells us that there can be no conflict between the Lord Mayor's scheme and that of the university, because the cost of the university scheme is to be defrayed by the British Government and by the response to appeals to Commonwealth and foreign Governments who are to be asked to contribute the balance. I understand that no appeal is to be made to the British public; and I trust that the Commonwealth and foreign Governments will respond to the extent necessary for the realization of the scheme.[3]

As for my other questions, I asked whether the university had been consulted before the Lord Mayor's appeal was launched; and why there was no reference to the university in the announcement. To this question, naturally, I did not expect a reply from the university itself. I also asked whether, in the centre and hostels to be built with the proceeds of the response to the Lord Mayor's appeal, students of Asiatic and African races would be received on the same terms as others. To this question the Principal replies that the "international centre" – the projected centre of the university – will be "open to all students in London," to students from all parts of the country, and (in parentheses) "all the world."[4] But this is only what I should expect of a university scheme. What I wanted to know was whether students of Asiatic and African races might expect to benefit from the scheme – for which the university is not responsible – to which we are asked to contribute.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

T. S. ELIOT

24, Russell Square, W.C.1, April 13.

NOTES

1. Dated 13 Apr 1950 on CC (King's H2n)

2. D. W. Logan's letter, printed in response to TSE's letter of 11 Apr 1950 (7.469), gives a general overview of the dire shortage of university accommodation for students in London, especially after many of their buildings were bombed during the war (7).

3. See 7.470, n.4

4. Logan stated that the international center "will be open to all students in London, whether members of the university or not, and also to students from other parts of the country – and indeed the world – when they are in London" (7).

A Letter from T. S. Eliot

To the Editor of *Poetry*

Poetry, 76 (May 1950) 88[1]

Dear Shapiro,

When your cable arrived, telling me that you had accepted the editorship of *Poetry*, I was in South Africa, and I did not know of it until my return over a month later. I am now writing, rather tardily, to acknowledge it and to send you my best wishes on taking office.[2]

For a good many years, I think, *Poetry* has ceased to belong to the category of the "little magazine." One of the distinguished marks of the "little magazine" is that it should be not only little, but short-lived. The little magazine, if no vicissitudes overtake it sooner, is limited in life to the literary editorship of one editor. If it does not come to an end abruptly, there remain two symptoms of decay: the first, if it changes its form in the attempt to become a bigger magazine – and when this happens, it loses one public without gaining another; the second, when it changes its editor. Now, *Poetry* has never changed its form: it remains obstinately the same in appearance as in the days when it printed "Prufrock."[3] (I have sometimes hoped to see a different quotation, whether from Whitman or somebody else, on the back of it; but even this conservatism is expressive of tenacity.)[4] And on the other hand, it has been fortunate, when it has had to have a new editor. *The Criterion*, even when it consisted of 200 pages (and however dull some of the pages may have been) was always a little magazine – not only because it was not self-supporting, but because it lived and died under one editor.[5]

Poetry, in fact, is not a little magazine but an INSTITUTION. It was in existence before most of its younger contributors were born: to some of them it must seem as ancient of days as the American Constitution or the *Atlantic Monthly*.[6] It can look back upon its past with satisfaction; but it remains perennially young and does not appear to need any drastic amendments. I congratulate it on passing into your hands; and I hope that the heavy responsibility will not bring you to a premature grave, or impair your own creative activity.[7]

With best wishes
Yours sincerely
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Dated 6 Mar 1950 on CC

2. The American poet and essayist Karl Shapiro (1913-2000) succeeded Hayden Carruth as the fifth editor of *Poetry* from 1950 to 1955. TSE had embarked on a six-week cruise to South Africa with the Fabers at the beginning of Jan 1950. He wrote to Morton Dauwen Zabel on 16 Oct 1950: "you are one of the people in Chicago whom I especially wanted to meet while here, and another is Karl Shapiro." TSE met Shapiro on 31 Oct 1950.

3. *Poetry* was founded in Chicago in Oct 1912 by Harriet Monroe; "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" first appeared in the June 1915 issue under her editorship.

4. The quotation from Walt Whitman, "To have great poets, there must be great audiences, too" ("Notes Left Over: Ventures, on an Old Theme." *Complete Prose Works*. Philadelphia: David McKay, 1891, 324), was removed in 1950 after Shapiro received this letter.

5. The *Criterion* appeared quarterly between Oct 1922 and Jan 1939 and monthly from May 1927 to Mar 1928, under TSE's editorship. It was financed from its inception until the end of 1927 primarily by Lady Rothermere and then by Faber and in the form of annual guarantees from individual supporters (1928-31). Thereafter, it was subsidized by Faber.

6. The *Atlantic Monthly*, "a magazine of literature, art and politics," was first published in Boston on 1 Nov 1857 under the editorship of James Russell Lowell.

7. In a letter to John Quinn of 12 Mar 1923, TSE described the effect the editorship of the *Criterion* had on his health and work: "I think the work and worry have taken ten years off my life. I have sunk the whole of my strength for the past eighteen months into this confounded paper, when I ought to have been minding my business and doing my own writing" (*L2* 72).

Un feuillet unique[1]

A tribute to Saint-John Perse

Les Cahiers de la Pléiade, 10 (Summer/Autumn 1950) 27-29

Mon cher Paulhan,

Un train attend en gare, rempli de pèlerins qui partent faire hommage à Saint-John Perse. L'heure du départ est déjà dépassée. J'arrive, je force le portillon malgré les protestations de l'employé ; essoufflé, en désordre, je me précipite dans un compartiment juste comme le train démarre. Pareille conduite est répréhensible, et il me faut subir les regards désapprobateurs de mes compagnons de route. Mais ce n'est pas là le pire. Les autres voyageurs ont pris le temps de se bien préparer : ils ont chacun un bagage qui contient un beau présent pour l'auteur auquel ils vont faire honneur. Non seulement le mien n'est pas suffisamment abondant pour mes propres besoins – j'ai oublié dans ma hâte d'indispensables vêtements de cérémonie – mais mon hommage au poète tient dans un unique feuillet : dans cette lettre.[2]

Je vous ennuierais si j'entreprenais de vous rendre compte des diverses affaires qui ont absorbé mon temps au cours d'une dure année de travail ; il vaut mieux que j'essaie de justifier ma présence, même aussi tardive, dans la compagnie.[3] Il y aura bientôt vingt-cinq ans, j'ai connu pour la première fois *Éloges* et *Anabase*, et je me suis mis à traduire en anglais le second de ces poèmes. Je suis fier que ma traduction d'*Anabase* – si imparfaite qu'elle fût, bien que je l'aie améliorée, je crois, dans les éditions suivantes – ait constitué la première présentation de Saint-John Perse au public anglais et américain.[4] Elle parut avec le texte français en regard, et ne sera jamais, je l'espère, imprimée seule : car elle avait pour unique but de présenter un poète important et nouveau à un auditoire étranger, et de faciliter la compréhension de son art.

Certainement, il y a un quart de siècle, on trouvait Saint-John Perse un poète difficile. Il ne s'inscrivait dans aucune catégorie, il n'avait en littérature ni liens de consanguinité ni ancêtres : une grande partie de la difficulté, c'est que son poème ne pouvait s'expliquer que par le poème lui-même. J'aurais moi-même beaucoup plus imparfaitement compris *Anabase*, si je ne m'étais donné pour tâche de le traduire. Quant à en être digne la chose dépassait mes moyens : j'en vins à me dire que non seulement ma connaissance du

français, mais qu'aussi ma connaissance de l'anglais n'étaient pas suffisantes. Mais on voit son influence dans quelques-uns des poèmes que j'écrivis après avoir achevé la traduction : influence des images et peut-être aussi du rythme. Ceux qui examineront mes derniers ouvrages trouveront peut-être que cette influence persiste toujours.

Si bien que c'est avec pour références le titre de premier traducteur en anglais que je me présente ; mais je saisis l'occasion de reconnaître une dette personnelle. Il y a bien d'autres choses que je dirais sur l'œuvre de Saint-John Perse, si je pouvais mettre en ordre et développer des idées ; pressé par le temps, je borne aux mots suivants mon hommage au poète : « Vous m'avez appris quelque chose. »

T. S. ELIOT

7 décembre 1949.

PUBLISHED ORIGINAL TEXT[1]

My dear Paulhan,

A train stands waiting in the station, filled with pilgrims setting forth to pay tribute to St. J. Perse. The hour of departure is already overdue. I arrive, forcing my way past the protesting guardian of the barrier; breathless and dishevelled, I fling myself into a carriage just as the train glides away. Such conduct is reprehensible, and I have to face the disapproving glances of my fellow-travellers. But this is not the worst. The other voyagers have prepared themselves well in advance: each of them has a case containing a handsome gift for the author they are setting forth to honour. Mine is not only inadequately filled for my own needs – in my haste I have omitted necessary articles of ceremonial dress – but my homage to the poet is only a single leaf: this letter.[2]

You would find it wearisome if I went on to account for the various business which has engrossed my time during an arduous year: it is more to the point that I should attempt to justify my presence in the company even on these terms.[3] Nearly twenty-five years ago I made the acquaintance of *Éloges* and of *Anabase*, and set myself to translate the latter work into English. I am proud of the fact that my translation of *Anabase* – imperfect as it was, though improved, I think, in later editions – was the first presentation of St. J. Perse to the English and American public.[4] It appeared with the French text and English translation *en regard*, and will never, I hope, be printed by itself: for its sole purpose was to introduce a new and important poet to a foreign audience, and to facilitate the understanding of his work.

Certainly, a quarter of a century ago, St. J. Perse was to be considered a difficult poet. He fitted in to no category, he had no obvious literary ancestry or consanguinity: a great part of the difficulty was that his poem could not be explained in terms of anything but itself. I myself should have a far more imperfect understanding of *Anabase* if I had not set myself to the task of translating it. It was beyond my resources to do it justice: I came to think that not only my command of French but my command of English was inadequate. But its influence appears in some of the poems which I wrote after completing this translation: influence of the imagery and perhaps also of the rhythm. Critics of my later work may find that this influence still persists.

So it is with the credentials of the first translator into English that I present myself; but I take the opportunity of acknowledging a personal debt. There is much else that I should say about the work of St. J. Perse, could I arrange and develop ideas; under pressure of time, I confine my homage to the poet to the words: "I have learned something from you."
7 décembre 1949.

NOTES

1. *un feuillet unique*: a single leaf. Translated into French by Dominique Aury. TSE's original text is printed in smaller type below the French. The TS of the English letter is in King's (H2m).

2. The editor of the *Cahiers de la Pléiade*, Jean Paulhan (1884-1968), wrote to TSE in May 1949 inquiring whether he would be able to prepare a contribution of three or four pages for a homage to Saint-John Perse by 20 June. TSE replied on 25 May that various commitments would make this impossible, though he offered to send a few lines in English to be translated into French. On 21 Oct, Paulhan wrote to remind TSE of his promise of a contribution: "À présent, je ne puis plus me passer du témoignage que vous m'avez promis. Ne fût-il que d'un page. . . . Mais ne nous manquez pas, je vous prie. Cet 'hommage' à Saint-John Perse est à présent prêt, peu s'en faut, et votre promesse nous était précieuse." *Trans*: At the moment I can no longer go without the testimonial which you have promised us. Even just a single page. . . . But please do not fail to contribute. This "homage" to St.-John Perse is now almost ready, and your promise [of a contribution] was invaluable to us.

Other contributors to this special issue on Perse, for example, Jules Supervielle and Giuseppe Ungaretti, sent in a poem or an essay written specifically for this occasion. TSE sent this letter to Paulhan on 10 Dec saying: "Voilà: le mieux que je puisse faire – je rentre de ma tournée en Allemagne (suivie d'une visite à Bruxelles) fatigué et dans un état d'hébétude complète. Si ces feuilles arrivent trop tard, c'est déplorable; si vous ne les jugez pas dignes d'être insérées, j'accepte votre jugement." *Trans*: Here is it: the best I can do. I am back from my German tour (followed by a visit to Brussels) tired and in a complete state of stupor. If these leaves arrive too late, that's regrettable; if you deem them unworthy of inclusion, I accept your judgment.

3. TSE wrote to Perse on 3 Oct 1949: "I was deeply grieved to be unable to do anything for his [Paulhan's] collection of homages to you when he wrote before, but I have had such a very

full year that there has been no time for additional pieces of work, and especially for one which I should wish to be worthy of its intention. Until the end of August, my time, apart from normal duties, was naturally taken up with my play, and immediately [after] that was finished, I had to begin writing lectures for a tour in Germany, which I am to undertake in a month's time. . . . If I hear from Paulhan, however, I shall at least try to write to you a letter which might be suitable for inclusion, merely as evidence of my wishes and testimony of my admiration."

4. Saint-John Perse published his first book, *Éloges*, in 1911 under the nom de plume Saint-Léger Léger. *Anabase* first appeared in French under the pseudonym St.-J. Perse in the Jan 1924 issue of *La Nouvelle Revue française*. Though TSE's translation of the poem was ready to be published in 1927, the first edition did not come out until 1930 because of Perse's prolonged delays in letting TSE have his criticisms. Subsequent revised editions of TSE's translation appeared in 1938 (the first US edition), 1949, and 1959. TSE acknowledged Perse's role in preparing the translation in the first preface: "As for the translation, it would not be even so satisfactory as it is, if the author had not collaborated with me to such an extent as to be half-translator" (4.134).

A Letter from T. S. Eliot, O.M.

To the Editor of *The Catacomb*

The Catacomb, New Ser. 1 (Summer 1950) 367-68[1]

You have asked me to contribute a message to *The Catacomb*, and because I wish well to *The Catacomb* and should like it to survive and flourish, I write this letter.[2] But I do not like the solemn word "message," because it seems to imply either that one thinks one has something very important to say, or that anything signed by oneself is important enough to be a message. Furthermore, I cannot regard a "message" from myself as a very good omen. I am often asked to support a candidate for some scholarship or other preferment; and although my support continues to be sought, I have been impressed by its inefficacy. And for a review or magazine, the endorsement of the editor of a review which panted for seventeen years with the aid of artificial respiration, can do little to improve the credit of the document endorsed.

A serious review can only survive by building up a list of regular subscribers. When you find, after two or three years, how many subscribers you can count upon – allowing for some losses and gains every year – out of the total population of Britain, you can try to cut your cloth accordingly. Then you are in a better position to appeal to the people – there are not very many – who may be willing to help; for it is easier to aim at a definite amount of backing to keep things going, than to ask for vague amounts towards an indefinite and probably chimerical future. You will never keep a serious review going without artificial respiration; and the sooner you can tell people just how much oxygen is needed to keep the heart beating, the better.

The Criterion had, in its palmiest days, some 800 subscriptions.[3] Beyond the libraries and colleges in Japan, India, Egypt, South America and the United States, and some at home, and the unknown individual subscribers in unknown places, it was surprising to find how few names on the list were those of people whose names were known to the editor. I suppose that today the situation is still more difficult. Instead of supporting literature by buying new books and subscribing to worthy periodicals, an increasing number of people feel that the Arts Council, or some such body, ought to do something about it. I have even heard it suggested, as a palliative of the

deplorable fact that people will not buy new books of verse by young poets, that the Arts Council should subsidize publishers – to produce more of the unsaleable commodity.[4]

The Catacomb is not altogether suited to the temper of the present time. For some years literature was involved with a silly kind of political enthusiasm. Less is heard about that now; in fact I think it is generally the opinion that the less said about politics the better, and that a literary review should disclose no convictions.[5] Your views appear to me independent; but I am sure that *The Catacomb* would be more acceptable to the patrons of art and letters (who won't subscribe in any case, however) if it discreetly avoided having any views at all.[6]

After this, I can do no other than enclose my subscription.

Yours sincerely,

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE wrote to Roy Campbell on 1 June 1950: "I should certainly wish to give my support to *The Catacomb*, and it is merely a question of whether I can write anything when you want it." TSE's letter of support is dated 19 June.

2. The monthly periodical the *Catacomb* (1949-50) inaugurated its new quarterly series in the summer of 1950 under the editorship of Robert Lyle and Roy Campbell. It was discontinued after seven issues in the winter of 1951-52.

3. In fact, sales of the *Criterion* peaked in 1927 at 1,200 copies, with just over 200 by subscription.

4. As chairman of the Arts Council Literature Panel, C. Day Lewis had advanced the proposal that the Arts Council "should subsidise the publication of poetry." TSE outlined his objections to this proposal in his "Address to the Publishers' Association" in Dec 1949 (7.456).

5. In a letter of 3 Sept 1923, TSE made it clear to F. W. Bain "that the *Criterion* is apart from current political controversy, that it is independent of party politics, and leagued with an ideal rather than with the actual Tory party. . . . I do not want people to think that the *Criterion* has become a party organ, or that it is pursuing politics miscellaneously alongside of literature" (*L2* 205).

6. The *Catacomb* published articles by some authors expressing right-wing Royalist, Catholic, and anti-Communist opinions.

Autobiographical Note

Harvard College Class of 1910: Fortieth Anniversary Report

Cambridge, MA: Cosmos Press, 1950; 78-79[1]

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT
Director, Faber & Faber Ltd., 24, Russell Square, London W. C. i.

My wife Vivienne Haigh died January, 1947.[2]

No vacations. No ideas. I have produced one book *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* and one play *The Cocktail Party*.[3] I have visited Paris, Rome, Stockholm, and Germany, mostly lecturing. Visited New York (1946) as representative of Faber & Faber Ltd., and Princeton (1948) as guest of the Institute of Advanced Study.[4]

NOTES

1. TSE's previous contribution was to the thirtieth anniversary report in 1940 (6.73).

2. TSE's first wife Vivien Haigh-Wood (b. 1888) died suddenly on 22 Jan 1947 in Northumberland House, a private mental asylum in Finsbury Park to which she had been confined since July 1938.

3. *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* was published on 5 Nov 1948, and *The Cocktail Party* was first produced at the Edinburgh Festival in Aug 1949 and published on 9 Mar 1950.

4. TSE lectured on "The Social Function of Poetry" in Paris in May 1945 (6.436); he gave addresses in Rome in Dec 1947 under the auspices of the British Council (7.70); he traveled to Sweden to deliver his acceptance speech during the Nobel Banquet at the City Hall in Stockholm on 10 Dec 1948 (7.466); and was engaged on a three-week lecturing tour of Germany in Oct-Nov 1949. TSE also undertook a business trip to the US in June-July 1946 and stayed at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton in Oct-Nov 1948.

Talk on Dante [What Dante Means to Me][1]

Italian News, 2 (July 1950) 13-18

May I explain first why I have chosen, not to deliver a lecture about Dante, but to talk informally about his influence upon myself? What might appear egotism, in doing this, I present as modesty; and the modesty which it pretends to be is merely prudence. I am in no way a Dante scholar; and my general knowledge of Italian is such, that on this occasion, out of respect to the audience and to Dante himself, I shall refrain from quoting him in Italian.[2] And I do not feel that I have anything more to contribute, on the subject of Dante's poetry, than I put, years ago, into a brief essay. As I explained in the original preface to that essay, I read Dante only with a prose translation beside the text.[3] Forty years ago I began to puzzle out the *Divine Comedy* in this way; and when I thought I had grasped the meaning of a passage which especially delighted me, I committed it to memory; so that, for some years, I was able to recite a large part of one canto or another to myself, lying in bed or on a railway journey. Heaven knows what it would have sounded like, had I recited it aloud; but it was by this means that I steeped myself in Dante's poetry. And now it is twenty years since I set down all that my meagre attainments qualified me to say about Dante. But I thought it not uninteresting to myself, and possibly to others, to try to record in what my own debt to Dante consists. I do not think I can explain everything, even to myself; but as I still, after forty years, regard his poetry as the most persistent and deepest influence upon my own verse, I should like to establish at least some of the reasons for it. Perhaps confessions by poets, of what Dante has meant to them, may even contribute something to the appreciation of Dante himself. And finally, it is the only contribution that I can make.

The greatest debts are not always the most evident; at least, there are different kinds of debt. The kind of debt that I owe to Dante is the kind which goes on accumulating, the kind which is not the debt of one period or another of one's life. Of some poets I can say I learned a great deal from them at a particular stage. Of Jules Laforgue, for instance, I can say that he was the first to teach me how to speak, to teach me the poetic possibilities of my own idiom of speech.[4] Such early influences, the influences which, so to speak, first introduce one to oneself, are, I think, due to an impression which

is in one aspect, the recognition of a temperament akin to one's own, and in another aspect the discovery of a form of expression which gives a clue to the discovery of one's own form. These are not two things, but two aspects of the same thing. But the poet who can do this for a young writer, is unlikely to be one of the great masters. The latter are too exalted and too remote. They are like distant ancestors who have been almost deified; whereas the smaller poet, who has directed one's first steps, is more like an admired elder brother.

Then, among influences, there are the poets from whom one has learned some one thing, perhaps of capital importance to oneself, though not necessarily the greatest contribution these poets have made. I think that from Baudelaire I learned first, a precedent for the poetical possibilities, never developed by any poet writing in my own language, of the more sordid aspects of the modern metropolis, of the possibility of fusion between the sordidly realistic and the phantasmagoric, the possibility of the juxtaposition of the matter-of-fact and the fantastic. From him, as from Laforgue, I learned that the sort of material that I had, the sort of experience that an adolescent had had, in an industrial city in America, could be the material for poetry;[5] and that the source of new poetry might be found in what had been regarded hitherto as the impossible, the sterile, the intractably unpoetic. That, in fact, the business of the poet was to make poetry out of the unexplored resources of the unpoetical; that the poet, in fact, was committed by his profession to turn the unpoetical into poetry. A great poet can give a younger poet everything that he has to give him, in a very few lines. It may be that I am indebted to Baudelaire chiefly for half a dozen lines out of the whole of *Fleurs du Mal*; and that his significance for me is summed up in the lines:

> Fourmillante Cité, cité pleine de rêves,
> Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant . . .[6]

I knew what *that* meant, because I had lived it before I knew that I wanted to turn it into verse on my own account.

I may seem to you to be very far from Dante. But I cannot give you any approximation of what Dante has done for me, without speaking of what other poets have done for me. When I have written about Baudelaire, or Dante, or any other poet who has had a capital importance in my own development, I have written *because* that poet has meant so much to me, but not about myself, but *about* that poet and his poetry. That is, the first impulse

to write about a great poet is one of gratitude; but the reasons for which one is grateful may play a very small part in a critical appreciation of that poet.

One has other debts, innumerable debts, to poets, of another kind. There are poets who have been at the back of one's mind, or perhaps consciously there, when one has had some particular problem to settle, for which something they have written suggests the method. There are those from whom one has consciously borrowed, adapting a line of verse to a different language or period or context. There are those who remain in one's mind as having set the standard for a particular poetic virtue, as Villon for honesty, and Sappho for having fixed a particular emotion in the right and the minimum number of words, once and for all.[7] There are also the great masters, to whom one slowly grows up. When I was young I felt much more at ease with the lesser Elizabethan dramatists than with Shakespeare: the former were, so to speak, playmates nearer my own size. One test of the great masters, of whom Shakespeare is one, is that the appreciation of their poetry is a lifetime's task, because at every stage of maturing – and that should be one's whole life – you are able to understand them better. Among these are Shakespeare, Dante, Homer and Virgil.

I have ranged over some varieties of "influence" in order to approach an indication, by contrast, of what Dante has meant to me. Certainly I have borrowed lines from him, in the attempt to reproduce, or rather to arouse in the reader's mind the memory, of some Dantesque scene, and thus establish a relationship between the mediaeval inferno and modern life. Readers of my *Waste Land* will perhaps remember that the vision of my city clerks trooping over London Bridge from the railway station to their offices evoked the reflection "I had not thought death had undone so many"; and that in another place I deliberately modified a line of Dante by altering it – "sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled." And I gave the references in my notes, in order to make the reader who recognised the allusion, know that I meant him to recognise it, and know that he would have missed the point if he did not recognise it.[8] Twenty years after writing *The Waste Land*, I wrote, in *Little Gidding*, a passage which is intended to be the nearest equivalent to a canto of the *Inferno* or the *Purgatorio*, in style as well as content, that I could achieve.[9] The intention of course, was the same as with my allusions to Dante in *The Waste Land*: to present to the mind of the reader a parallel, by means of contrast, between the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, which Dante

visited and a hallucinated scene after an air-raid. But the method is different: here I was debarred from quoting or adapting at length – I borrowed and adapted freely only a few phrases – because I was *imitating*. My first problem was to find an approximation to the *terza rima* without rhyming. English is less copiously provided with rhyming words than Italian; and those rhymes we have are in a way more emphatic. The rhyming words call too much attention to themselves: Italian is the one language known to me in which exact rhyme can always achieve its effect – and what the effect of rhyme is, is for the neurologist rather than the poet to investigate – without the risk of obtruding itself.[10] I therefore adopted, for my purpose, a simple alternation of unrhymed masculine and feminine terminations, as the nearest way of giving the light effect of the rhyme in Italian. In saying this, I am not attempting to lay down a law, but merely explaining how I was directed in a particular situation. I think that rhymed *terza rima* is probably less unsatisfactory for translations of the *Divine Comedy* than is blank verse. For, unfortunately for this purpose, a different metre is a different mode of thought; it is a different kind of *punctuation*, for the emphases and the breath pauses do not come in the same place. Dante *thought* in *terza rima*, and a poem should be translated as nearly as possible in the same thought-form as the original. So that, in a translation into blank verse, something is lost; though on the other hand, when I read a *terza rima* translation of the *Divine Comedy* and come to some passage of which I remember the original pretty closely, I am always worried in anticipation, by the inevitable shifts and twists which I know the translator will be obliged to make, in order to fit Dante's words into English rhyme.[11] And no verse seems to demand greater literalness in translation than Dante's, because no poet convinces one more completely that the word he has used is the word he wanted, and that no other will do.

I do not know whether the substitute for rhyme that I used in the passage referred to would be tolerable for a very long original poem in English: but I do know that I myself should not find the rest of my life long enough time in which to write it. For one of the interesting things I learnt in trying to imitate Dante in English, was its extreme difficulty. This section of a poem – not the length of one canto of the *Divine Comedy* – cost me far more time and trouble and vexation than any passage of the same length that I have ever written. It was not simply that I was limited to the Dantesque type of imagery, simile and figure of speech. It was chiefly that in this very bare and austere style, in which every word has to be "functional," the slightest

vagueness or imprecision is immediately noticeable.[12] The language has to be very direct; the line, and the single word, must be completely disciplined to the purpose of the whole; and, when you are using simple words and simple phrases, any repetition of the most common idiom, or of the most frequently needed word, becomes a glaring blemish.

I am not saying that *terza rima* is to be ruled out of original English verse composition; though I believe that to the modern ear – that is, the ear trained during this century, and therefore accustomed to much greater exercise in the possibilities of unrhymed verse – a modern long poem in a set rhymed form is more likely to sound monotonous as well as artificial, than it did to the ear of a hundred years ago. But I am sure that it is only possible in a long poem, if the poet is borrowing only the form, and not attempting to remind the reader of Dante in every line and phrase. There is one poem in the nineteenth century which, at moments, seems to contradict this. This is the *Triumph of Life*. I should have felt called upon to-day to refer to Shelley in any case, because Shelley is the English poet, more than all others, upon whom the influence of Dante was remarkable. It seems to me that Shelley confirms also my impression that the influence of Dante, where it is really powerful, is a *cumulative* influence: that is, the older you grow, the stronger the domination becomes. The *Triumph of Life*, a poem which is Shelley's greatest tribute to Dante, was the last of his great poems. I think it was also the greatest. It was left unfinished; it breaks off abruptly in the middle of a line; and one wonders whether even Shelley could have carried it to successful completion.[13] Now the influence of Dante is observable earlier; most evident in the *Ode to the West Wind*, in which, at the very beginning, the image of the leaves whirling in the wind

Like stricken ghosts from an enchanter fleeing[14]

would have been impossible but for the *Inferno* – in which the various manifestations of *wind*, and the various sensations of *air*, are as important as are the aspects of *light* in the *Paradiso*. In *The Triumph of Life* however I do not think that Shelley was setting himself to aim at such a close approximation to the spareness of Dante as I was; he had left open for himself all of his copious resources of English poetical speech. Nevertheless, because of a natural affinity with the poetic imagination of Dante, a saturation in the poetry (and I need not remind you that Shelley knew Italian well, and had a wide and thorough knowledge of all Italian poetry up to his time) his mind is inspired to some of the greatest and most Dantesque lines in English. I

must quote one passage which made an indelible impression upon me over forty-five years ago:

Struck to the heart by this sad pageantry,
Half to myself I said – "And what is this?
Whose shape is that within the car? And why –"

I would have added – "is all here amiss? –"
But a voice answered – "Life!" – I turned, and knew
(O Heaven, have mercy on such wretchedness!)

That what I thought was an old root which grew
To strange distortion out of the hill side,
Was indeed one of those deluded crew,

And that the grass, which methought hung so wide
And white, was but his thin discoloured hair,
And that the holes he vainly sought to hide,

Were or had been eyes: – "If thou canst forbear
To join the dance, which I had well forborne,"
Said the grim Feature, of my thought aware,

"I will unfold that which to this deep scorn
Led me and my companions, and relate
The progress of the pageant since the morn;

"If thirst of knowledge shall not then abate,
Follow it thou even to the night, but I
Am weary." – Then like one who with the weight

Of his own words is staggered, wearily
He paused; and ere he could resume, I cried:
"First, who art thou?" – "Before thy memory,

"I feared, loved, hated, suffered, did and died,
And if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit
Had been with purer nutriment supplied,

"Corruption would not now thus much inherit
Of what was once Rousseau, – nor this disguise
Stain that which ought to have disdained to wear it . . .[15]

Well, this is better than I could do. But I quote it, as one of the supreme tributes to Dante in English; for it testifies to what Dante has done, both for the style and for the soul, of a great English poet. And incidentally, a very interesting comment on Rousseau. It would be interesting, but otiose, to pursue the evidence of Shelley's debt to Dante further; it is sufficient, to those who know the source, to quote the first three of the prefatory lines to *Epipsychidion* –

> My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
> Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,
> Of such hard matter dost thou entertain.[16]

I think I have already made clear, however, that the important debt to Dante does not lie in a poet's borrowings, or adaptations from Dante; nor is it one of those debts which are incurred only at a particular stage in another poet's development. Nor is it found in those passages in which one has taken him as a model. The important debt does not occur in relation to the number of places in one's writings to which a critic can point a finger, and say, here and there he wrote something which he could not have written unless he had had Dante in mind. Nor do I wish to speak now of any debt which one may owe to the thought of Dante, to his view of life, or to the philosophy and theology which give shape and content to the *Divine Comedy*. That is another, though by no means unrelated question. Of what one learns, and goes on learning, from Dante I should like to make three points.

The first is, that of the very few poets of similar stature there is none, not even Virgil, who has been a more attentive student of the *art* of poetry, or a more scrupulous, painstaking and *conscious* practitioner of the *craft*. Certainly no English poet can be compared with him in this respect, for the more conscious craftsmen – and I am thinking primarily of Milton – have been much more limited poets, and therefore more limited in their craft also. To realise more and more what this means, through the years of one's life, is itself a moral lesson; but I draw a further lesson from it which is a moral lesson too. The whole study and practice of Dante seems to me to teach that the poet should be the servant of his language, rather than the master of it. This sense of responsibility is one of the marks of the *classical* poet, in the sense of "classical" which I have tried to define elsewhere, in speaking of Virgil.[17] Of some great poets, and of some great English poets especially, one can say that they were privileged by their genius to *abuse* the English language, to develop an idiom so peculiar and even eccentric, that

it could be of no use to later poets. Dante seems to me to have a place in Italian literature – which, in this respect, only Shakespeare has in ours; that is, they give body to the soul of the language, conforming themselves, the one more and the other less consciously, to what they divined to be its possibilities. And Shakespeare himself takes liberties which only his genius justifies; liberties which Dante, with an equal genius, does not take. To pass on to posterity one's own language, more highly developed, more refined, and more precise than it was before one wrote it, that is the highest possible achievement of the poet as poet. Of course, a really supreme poet makes poetry also more difficult for his successors, but the simple fact of his supremacy, and the price a literature must pay, for having a Dante or a Shakespeare, is that it can have only *one*. Later poets must find something else to do, and be content if the things left to do are lesser things. But I am not speaking of what a supreme poet, one of those few without whom the current speech of a people with a great language would not be what it is, does for later poets, or of what he prevents them from doing, but of what he does for everybody after him who speaks that language, whose mother tongue it is, whether they are poets, philosophers, statesmen or railway porters.

That is one lesson: that the great master of a language should be the great servant of it. The second lesson of Dante – and it is one which no poet, in any language known to me, can teach, is the lesson of *width of emotional range*. Perhaps it could be best expressed under the figure of the spectrum, or of the gamut. Employing this figure, I may say that the great poet should not only perceive and distinguish more clearly than other men, the colours or sounds within the range of ordinary vision or hearing; he should perceive vibrations beyond the range of ordinary men, and be able to make men see and hear more at each end than they could ever see without his help. We have for instance in English literature great religious poets, but they are, by comparison with Dante, *specialists*. That is all they can do. And Dante, because he could do everything else, is for that reason the greatest "religious" poet, though to call him a "religious poet" would be to abate his universality. The *Divine Comedy* expresses everything in the way of emotion, between depravity's despair and the beatific vision, that man is capable of experiencing. It is therefore a constant reminder to the poet, of the obligation to explore, to find words for the inarticulate, to capture those feelings which people can hardly even feel, because they have no words for them; and at the same time, a reminder that the explorer beyond the frontiers of ordinary consciousness will only be able to return and report to his fellow-citizens, if

he has all the time a firm grasp upon the realities with which they are already acquainted.

These two achievements of Dante are not to be thought of as separate or separable. The task of the poet, in making people comprehend the incomprehensible, demands immense resources of language; and in developing the language, enriching the meaning of words and showing how much words can do, he is making possible a much greater range of emotion and perception for other men, because he gives them the speech in which more can be expressed. I only suggest as an instance what Dante did for his own language – and for ours, since we have taken the word and anglicised it – by the verb *trasumanar*.[18]

What I have been saying just now is not irrelevant to the fact – for to me it appears an incontestable fact – that Dante is, beyond all other poets of our continent, the most *European*. He is the least provincial – and yet that statement must be immediately protected by saying that he did not become the "least provincial" by ceasing to be local. No one is more local; one never forgets that there is much in Dante's poetry which escapes any reader whose native language is not Italian; but I think that the foreigner is less *aware* of any residuum that must for ever escape him, than any of us is in reading any other master of a language which is not our own. The Italian of Dante is somehow *our* language from the moment we begin to try to read it; and the lessons of craft, of speech and of exploration of sensibility are lessons which any European can take to heart and try to apply in his own tongue.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. A talk delivered at the Italian Institute, 39 Belgrave Square, London, at 6:30 p.m. on 4 July 1950; the address was announced in the *Times* of 4 July with the title "What Dante Means to Me" (5). Rpt. in the *Adelphi*, 27 (First Quarter 1951), 106-14, and posthumously as "What Dante Means to Me" in *To Criticize the Critic* (1965). On 15 May, TSE wrote to Dr. F. Montanari of the Italian Embassy in London: "When the Ambassador spoke to me, and suggested that I should come to the Institute and say something about Dante, I envisaged something much slighter, and more informal. I am extremely sorry, but I am afraid that the preparation of a real lecture on this or indeed, on any other subject, would be quite beyond the possibilities without a good deal more time for preparation. I think that the most I could be prepared to do with the very limited time at my disposal, would be to give a short informal talk of about half an hour, simply on my own indebtedness to Dante." On 27 June, TSE reported to Joseph Chiari that he was preparing "an informal talk on Dante, to be given at the new Italian Institute on Tuesday, the 4th"; he wrote to Ifor Evans on 31 Aug: "I have no objection to your reprinting my Dante address (please do not call it a lecture!), in *The Adelphi*."

TSE was introduced by Tommaso Gallarati Scotti, Dante scholar and Italian ambassador in London, who, inviting him to speak about his "rapporti piú intimi con la poesia del suo fratello maggiore" [his most intimate relationship with the poetry of his elder brother], stated that TSE "sa che cosa significhi la 'selva oscura,' cosa significhi inferno e peccato. Ma sa anche le vie per cui si ritorna 'a riveder le stelle'" [knows the meaning of "dark wood," or the meaning of hell and sin. But he also knows the ways through which one returns "again to see the Stars"] (13).

2. TSE made the same apologetic statement in his preface to *Dante* (1929): "I am not a Dante scholar; my Italian is chiefly self-taught, and learnt primarily in order to read Dante; I need still to make constant reference to translations" (3.695). He wrote to John Hayward on 27 Feb 1940: "I am considering an invitation from the British Council to go in May to Italy for a fortnight to lecture at six places from Palermo to Milan. I ask them what they want me to lecture about (I hope not Spender & Auden) and in what language, as I can't attempt Italian anyway" (King's).

3. TSE explained that he began reading Dante "with a public school knowledge of Latin, a traveller's smattering of Italian, and a literal translation beside the text" (3.695). His marked three-volume Temple Classics edition of the *Commedia* (London: J. M. Dent, 1909-10) is in the Houghton.

4. TSE first encountered the poetry of Jules Laforgue in Arthur Symons's *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, which he found in the *Harvard Advocate* Library in Dec 1908. His early poem "Humouresque" (Nov 1909) is subtitled: "(After J. Laforgue)" (*CPP* 602 / *Poems1* 237).

5. TSE later recalled in "The Influence of Landscape upon the Poet" (1960): "for nine months of the year my scenery was almost exclusively urban, and a good deal of it seedily, drably urban at that. My urban imagery was that of St. Louis, upon which that of Paris and London have been superimposed" (8.389).

6. "Les Sept Vieillards" [The Seven Old Men], ll. 1-2; *read*: "Fourmillante cité." *Trans*: Swarming city, city full of dreams, where the ghost in broad daylight accosts the passer-by. TSE referred to these lines in his note to line 60 of *The Waste Land* (*CPP* 76 / *Poems1* 73).

7. TSE wrote in "Modern Tendencies in Poetry" (1920): "What constitutes the terrible authenticity of Villon's testaments is that he *saw* his feelings, watched them, as coldly as an astronomer watches a a comet; and without this cold and scientific observation he could never have given his feelings their permanent intensity" (2.214-15). He argued in his first Clark Lecture (1926) that "Sappho's great ode ['Ode to Anactoria'], for instance, is a real advance, a development, in human consciousness; it sets down, within its verse, the unity of an experience which had previously existed only unconsciously; in recording the physical concomitants of an emotion it modifies the emotion" (2.614-15).

8. TSE referred the reader to *Inferno* III.55-57 and *Inferno* IV.25-27 in his notes to lines 63 and 64, respectively (*CPP* 76-77 / *Poems1* 73).

9. *Little Gidding* II, ll. 25-96 (*CPP* 193-95 / *Poems1* 203-05). See Helen Gardner, *The Composition of "Four Quartets"* (London: Faber, 1978), 171-96, and *Poems2*, 520-33 for a detailed textual history of this section.

10. In the chapter "The *Impasse* of Musical Theory" in *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924), I. A. Richards adopts a neurological approach when discussing the effects that various arrangements of aural stimuli have on the nervous system.

11. In a letter to Laurence Binyon of 16 May 1930, TSE defined Henry Francis Cary's blank-verse translation of the *Commedia* (1805-14) as "painful"; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's version

in blank *terzine* (1867) as "weary"; and Charles Eliot Norton's prose translation (1891-92) as "dull" (*L5* 183). TSE admired Binyon's *terza-rima* translation (1933-43) and offered advice on his draft of *Paradiso* XXX and XXXIII in a letter of 7 July 1941. He wrote to Bonamy Dobrée on 23 Aug 1961: "I am familiar with several translations of Dante in terza rima, of course, especially Binyon's which is the best I know. But I feel very strongly that rhymes in English are too emphatic, and in a passage of any length this form of verse becomes tiring. In Italian the rhymes seem to come quite naturally and lightly. This cannot be reproduced by English rhymes" (Brotherton).

12. In "To Criticize the Critic" (1961) , TSE later stated: "In my youth, I think that Dante's astonishing economy and directness of language – his arrow that goes unerringly to the centre of the target – provided for me a wholesome corrective to the extravagances of the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline authors in whom I also delighted" (8.466).

13. *The Triumph of Life* (1822), written in *terza rima* in imitation of Dante's *Commedia* and Petrarch's *Trionfi*, was left unfinished due to Shelley's death by drowning. TSE wrote to Charles Davies on 17 Nov 1928 that *The Triumph of Life* "approaches Dante more nearly than any other English poem" (*L4* 322) and later defined it in *UPUC* as "his last, and to my mind greatest though unfinished poem" (4.643).

14. Line 3; *read*: "like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing"

15. *The Triumph of Life*, ll. 176-205. *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Humphrey Milford / OUP, 1919), 507-08. In TSE's copy, ll. 176-90 and 201-04 are marked in the margin; "Had been with purer nutriment supplied" (l. 202) is underlined. Minor punctuation discrepancies have been corrected to Hutchinson.

16. As stated in the "Advertisement" to the poem, the prefatory stanza to *Epipsychidion* (1821) "is almost a literal translation from Dante's famous Canzone *Voi, ch'intendendo, il terzo ciel movete, etc.*" (*The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 406). In the last strophe of this canzone, which opens the second treatise of the *Convivio*, Dante addresses his song directly: "Canzone, io credo che saranno radi / color che tua ragione intendan bene, / tanto la parli faticosa e forte" (ll. 53-55).

17. See "What Is a Classic?" (1944) (6.669)

18. "Trasumanar significar *per verba* / non si poria;" *Paradiso* I.70-71. *Trans*: "To pass beyond humanity may not be told in words" (*DC3* 7). TSE quoted these lines in "A Neglected Aspect of Chapman" (1924) (2.555) and in "Dante" (1929) (3.724). According to the OED, the adjective "transhuman," meaning "beyond the human; superhuman," and the derivative verb "transhumanate," are derived from "Italian *trasumanar* in Dante."

Untitled Note to the New Edition of *Selected Essays*

New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950. Pp. xiv + 460; Untitled Note, [ix].

I have expanded the original volume of *Selected Essays: 1917-1932* by including a few essays from the now superfluous *Essays Ancient and Modern*.[1] There remain several uncollected papers which I am disposed to preserve, as well as a number of unpublished lectures, on matters connected with the art of poetry, which await their final form. But *Selected Essays* is already bulky enough; and any literary essays which are not to be found in it must abide their collection into another book.

On reviewing the contents of this book, I find myself at times inclined to quarrel with my own opinions,[2†] and more often to criticise the way in which they were expressed. For myself, this book is a kind of historical record of my interests and opinions. As one grows older one may become less dogmatic and pragmatical; but there is no assurance that one becomes wiser; and it is even likely that one becomes less sensitive. And where I have adhered to the same opinions, many readers may prefer them in the form in which they were first expressed.

T. S. E.

London: July, 1950.

NOTES

1. TSE included four essays from the ten in *Essays Ancient and Modern* (London: Faber & Faber, 1936): "In Memoriam (1936)," "Religion and Literature (1935)," "The *Pensées of Pascal* (1931)," and "Modern Education and the Classics (1932)." This is the second American edition, published on 5 Oct 1950, based on the first American edition of 15 Sept 1932. Between the two editions, Faber published the second English edition in 1934, making emendations and including the essay "John Marston" from *Elizabethan Essays* (1934). Harcourt, by failing to base the second American on the second English edition, omitted "John Marston" from the contents. As the third English edition was based on the second 1934 edition, it contained "John Marston" in addition to the same four essays included from *EAM*, thus making the second American an uncorrected and incomplete hybrid edition. When the third enlarged English edition was published on 3 Sept 1951, TSE included this note, with the date changed to "April 1951" (hereafter *SE1951*). See I.xviii-xix.

2†. In *SE1951*: judgments

National Cultural Institutes

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (11 July 1950) 5

Sir, – In your issue of July 4 Mr. Hermon Ould places on record the conviction of the executive committee of the English Centre of the P. E. N. Club that "it should be possible to devise ways of safeguarding national security without destroying the lines of cultural communication between one country and another."[1] This affirmation is provoked by the closing of some foreign institutes here for political reasons: in Mr. Ould's letter no institute is named.[2]

Many things "should be possible" which are not; but if the executive committee, by devoting further study to the matter, can advance to the conviction that what should be possible is possible, it should be possible for the committee to suggest ways and means by which the cultural aspect could be separated from the "political aspect" – on which the committee expressly refrains from commenting.[3]

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

T. S. ELIOT

24, Russell Square, W.C.1.

NOTES

1. The English poet and playwright Hermon Ould (1885-1951), general secretary of the International P. E. N. Club, made this statement at the end of his letter to the editor of 4 July (5). The English P. E. N. Club was founded in 1921 by Amy Dawson Scott and John Galsworthy in order to foster deeper understanding between cultures and promote literature as a means of uniting European intellectuals after the end of World War I.

2. Ould must have been referring to the closure, in Apr 1950, of the Hungarian cultural institute in London as a retaliatory response to the Hungarian government's expulsion of the British military attaché, Lieutenant-Colonel Capron, and the commercial attaché, E. P. Southby, on grounds of alleged espionage. In May 1950, the British government also requested that the Czech Institute in London be closed in retaliation for the Czech action of closing down the British Council in Czechoslovakia because of its alleged role in subversive activities.

3. Ould stated in his letter: "We do not wish to comment on the political aspect of the authorities' action; that is not our concern" (5).

Preface to *English Poetry and its Contribution to the Knowledge of a Creative Principle*, by Leone Vivante

London: Faber & Faber, 1950. Pp. xv + 340; Preface, vii-xi.[1]

I have always remembered a distinction drawn by R. G. Collingwood at the beginning of *The Principles of Art*. He contrasts two types of theorist in the field of aesthetics: the "philosopher-aesthetician" and the "artist-aesthetician," and draws attention to the different types of error to which they are exposed. If I advert here to these two kinds of theorist, it is because Signor Vivante seems to me to escape the mistakes of both, and because the distinction may help me to elucidate his particular merit.[2]

The philosopher-aesthetician is frequently a philosopher who has thought it necessary, in order to complete his philosophical system, to produce a volume on aesthetics. The reason why he often fails to impress us, is because his theory appears to have no relation to our own appreciation of the arts; because he fails to deepen our understanding of those works of art which we do admire, to correct our taste when we like the wrong things, or like the right things in the wrong way, and to open our minds to the enjoyment of other works of art to which we have been insensitive. Furthermore, his illustrations from the several arts are sometimes suspiciously familiar: Shakespeare, Goethe and Dante in poetry; Michaelangelo and Leonardo in the visual arts (architecture is less often appealed to); Bach and Beethoven in music; they have all been called upon to dignify a dubious theory. We sometimes even wonder whether the philosopher had ever read poetry, or looked at paintings or listened to music with an innocent eye and ear, and surrendered himself to enjoyment, before he started to construct his aesthetics. We may mistrust any theory of art which takes no account of the art of various societies, however remote, and of the art of different ages, including our own period. And we may wonder whether a wider knowledge, and a finer sensibility, might not have compelled some modification of the theory.

The "artist-aesthetician," on the other hand, may rely too much upon his sensibility to compensate for his ignorance of philosophy; and, upon a solid foundation of experience, he may erect a very flimsy theory. He starts from those works of art which he admires, and tries to elaborate a theory which will show what all these works have in common – why, in short, it is right

to like these and wrong to like those which do not interest him. He may want to justify his enthusiasm for early Chinese pottery, the wood carvings of the Solomon Islands, and the produce of the studios of his friends. If he himself practises some art, he will be strongly moved to direct other artists to practise, and the public to applaud, those styles that he thinks right for his own time and the immediate future. He had better be candid about this: for it is a necessary and laudable task. He should not be ashamed of exalting neglected artists of the past or of other languages and civilizations, even above their merit, in order to call attention to their value, if he is convinced that these are the most profitable subjects of study, and the best possible influences upon his own contemporaries and juniors. Nor should he be afraid of mocking established reputations for similar reasons. He is only astray, when he attempts to identify what is best for his own time with what is best universally and always; when, in other words, he pretends to erect a theory good for all time upon his perception of what is needed for the present.

If the "artist-aesthetician" is not himself an artist, but rather a critic and connoisseur, he is still more in danger of confounding the criteria for a particular fashion, with criteria for all times and places. Now fashion is not to be despised. We are all, and I think rightly, responsive to it. Every age must have its own tastes; and it may find, in reviewing the art of the past, that the styles which it finds most sympathetic, most closely akin to the style the age needs for its own expression, are not those to which the previous generation most warmly responded. But the critic who confuses the roles of advocate and judge, in his championship of a particular type of art, can be as narrow a dogmatist as the philosopher-aesthetician who pretends to reveal the meaning of art without having had the aesthetic experience.

Signor Vivante is, as his other works attest, primarily a philosopher.[3] But a study of the several chapters of this book will show that he has not mustered his poets merely to testify on his behalf, but that his knowledge and love of poetry, and of English poetry especially, have antedated and provoked the theory. And in return, his theory itself, if accepted, must affect deeply our reading not only of the poets examined but others. In the first place, his choice of poets is not itself a literary valuation. He has simply, and wisely, made use of those whom he knows best. A different selection of poets might have served his turn equally well; but it is probably good for the reader to find, among these poets, some whom he had always regarded as second-rate. He may be surprised to find Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Wilde and

Longfellow (though I myself consider Longfellow underrated). If I find the first two of these three poets inferior, it is on grounds of literary criticism (as well as because of personal taste), which have nothing to do with Signor Vivante's thesis. What matters here, is whether they do or do not, whatever their shortcomings, provide evidence; and what flatters most is that Signor Vivante read and enjoyed the work of all these poets for its own sake; that he has not studied poetry in order to provide evidence for a thesis, but that the thesis issues out of his reading of the poets whose work he has enjoyed.

While this is a philosophical work, and not a mere series of studies in poetry, the aptness of the illustrations implies that the theory throws light on the work of the poets who are called into the witness-box for it. So while the more philosophically-minded reader will read the book in the order in which it is presented, and endeavour to grasp the leading ideas before examining the evidence, the reader whose primary interest is in poetry can begin with the chapters on the poets, or even with the chapters dealing with those poets whose work he knows best: he will, I think, be impelled to turn to the chapters in which the author's thesis and conclusions are stated. Whether he does or not, he will have been shown, in a new light, the poetry of poets whom he thought he already understood.

There are at least two important conclusions, of value for our appreciation of poetry, to which I wish to call attention. The first is the establishment of a distinction between what we may call "poetic thought" and "the thought of the poet." In the short but densely packed chapter on Coleridge, Signor Vivante distinguishes between that poet's "*poetical* insight into *self-activity*" and his more systematic thought (and on the next page, page 123, throws out a most interesting suggestion, in relation to the Italian quattrocento, about the way in which a current of living philosophical thought may be of use to the poet).[4] He is not, of course, in this chapter, concerned with Coleridge's philosophical prose, but he observes significantly:

> But as regards Coleridge's own poetry, we may sometimes doubt, while perusing it, whether it found a help and not a drawback in the fact that perhaps the main centre of his philosophical interest and developments was outside his poems. [123]

And at the beginning of the next paragraph:

> It might even be jocosely said of Coleridge, that his poetry, aware of the dangers of a divided interest, tried to find an escape from philosophy – in magic. [123]

And the few quotations which Signor Vivante gives from Coleridge's poems are none of them from the three more "magical" poems most often read.[5] But it is in the essay on Shelley – an essay which has brought me to a new and more sympathetic appreciation of that poet – that the distinction appears most clearly.[6] Signor Vivante finds Shelley's poetic thought, not in the political and social views inspiring "Prometheus Unbound" (or the Notes to "Queen Mab"),[7] or in the literary history of the "philosophy of love" to be found in "Epipsychidion," but in recurrent insights which turn up again and again in Shelley's poetry. These insights are what may be called the proper thinking of Shelley's poetry.[8]

The distinction which Signor Vivante establishes ought, I think, to deter thoughtful readers from inquiring of a poet (if living) what he *meant* by any particular poem. Those who ask the question assume that a poem is a poetical dressing up, or disguise, of something which can be put equivalently in simple straightforward terms; and, if the poet cannot put it in other terms – the terms in which a student to be examined on a poem thinks that he can satisfy his examiners – conclude, either that it is of the nature of poetry to be "meaningless," or else that the meaning is to be found by probing into the unconscious mind, or the concealed biography of the author.

Signor Vivante disposes of the error of supposing that a poem can be explained by the author, and the error of supposing that a poem has no meaning; and he also contradicts the assumption that all poetry can be explained by investigation of the unconscious. Still more important, I think, than his distinction between poetic thought and the poet's thinking about or around his poetic thought, is his affirmation – I believe of capital importance – that there is in poetry a genuine creative activity. That something comes into being which is new – in the sense that it cannot be explained by literary or other influences, or by infantile experience that the poet has chosen to forget, or by racial memories and myths of which he is unaware.

> But Shakespeare's works have, in this respect, the merit of being the strongest bulwark against modern psychology. So long as Shakespeare continues to have influence on the English language, it will be difficult for English-speaking people to forget the soul for the complexes, the instincts, the subconscious, the unconscious, or the tropisms. Indeed, the same well-deserving quality, or influence, can be ascribed to all poetry. But as regards Shakespeare, it is in a particularly high degree that the

> non-composite principle of subjectivity shows, as it were, under our very eyes, its *absolutely inherent* richness and depth. [59-60]

I ought also to call attention to Signor Vivante's speculations on the nature of "sensation" and on the isolation of sensation from thought (in which he joins issue with Collingwood).[9] But I have wished to limit my prefatory presentation to what readers may be prepared to accept from a literary critic who is neither philosopher nor psychologist; and I have said enough, I think, to give the assurance that this book is one which deserves the close study of both philosophers and students of poetry.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Vivante's own translation of his *La poesia inglese ed il suo contributo alla conoscenza dello spirito* (Florence: Vallecchi, [1947]). In reference to his composition of the preface, TSE wrote on 9 May 1950 to Joseph Chiari, who had asked TSE to write a preface for his book, *Contemporary French Poetry* (7.711), that he already had "two prefaces on which I should be working. One indeed, for a book to be published by my own Firm." Vivante's volume was published by Faber on 14 July 1950. When the literary historian G. M. Trevelyan, known for his studies of the Italian general Giuseppe Garibaldi, wrote to praise the book, TSE replied on 17 July: "Had I thought of this in time, I might have attempted to get you to write the Preface, instead of doing it myself, since a book like this needs all the incidental aids it can get to bring it to the attention of appreciative readers. But it is a book which I am glad to publish without any expectation of adequate return, and it is of a type and quality which finds publication more and more difficult nowadays." TSE later wrote to John Nef on 15 Aug 1951 that this book "seems to me not only interesting as criticism of English poetry by a foreigner, but for the very interesting theory of poetics which the author advances" (quoted in *L3* 96, n.1).

The Italian philosopher Leone Vivante (1887-1970) authored a number of works on ethics and the theory of knowledge. TSE had initially written about him to Richard Aldington on 20 Sept 1923: "there is also this Italian of Ezra's whom I cannot read and whom you cannot read" (*L2* 218), but he later admitted to I. A. Richards on 8 Mar 1926 that "what I have seen of his work impresses me favourably" (*L3* 97). Vivante's essay "The Misleading Comparison between Art and Dreams" appeared in the *Criterion* of June 1926.

2. R. G. Collingwood makes this distinction in his introduction to *The Principles of Art*, "Artist-aestheticians and Philosopher-aestheticians" (Oxford: Clarendon, 1938), 2-4. The book had been reviewed in the *Criterion* of Oct 1938 by E. W. F. Tomlin. TSE had attended Collingwood's lectures at Oxford on Aristotle's *De anima* in 1914-15 and reviewed his *Religion and Philosophy* in 1917 (1.556).

3. His other works include *Principii di etica* [*Principles of Ethics*] (1920); *Della intelligenza nell'espressione* (1922), translated as *Intelligence in Expression* (1925) and reviewed in the *Criterion* of Apr 1925; *Note sopra la originalità del pensiero* (1925), translated as *Notes on the Originality of Thought* (1927) and reviewed by Herbert Read in the *Criterion* of Oct 1927; *Studi sulle precognizioni*

[*Studies on Precognitions*] (1937); and *Il concetto dell'indeterminazione* [*The Concept of Indeterminacy*] (1938).

4. At the beginning of the chapter on Coleridge (122-26), Vivante writes: "It would be worth while to compare in the works of a writer his direct, i.e. *poetical* insight into *self-activity*, with, even on the same page and in the same context, his, in a sense, more systematic philosophical thought, in a higher degree intentional and inferential" (122). He argues later: "It is indeed also true that every great poet, in order to be able to say his own word, a new word, strives to absorb, in the measure of his capacity, the philosophy and culture of his age and of all the past. . . . Thus the Italian poets of the fourteenth century – when philosophy, we may add, had comparatively a greater part in general culture than it has to-day – found at their disposal a glowing *medium* of words, inherited from ancient philosophy and interpreted, enriched, and in many respects deepened by medieval philosophers, theologians and mystics" (123). By "Italian quattrocento," TSE means the Trecento.

5. Vivante quotes from "Dejection: An Ode," "The Picture," and "What Is Life?" (125-26).

6. In *UPUC*, TSE wrote of Shelley: "I find his ideas repellent; . . . some of Shelley's views I positively dislike, and that hampers my enjoyment of the poems in which they occur; and others seem to me so puerile that I cannot enjoy the poems in which they occur" (4.642, 643).

7. *Prometheus Unbound: A Lyrical Drama in Four Acts* (1820), which TSE read at the age of fifteen "with secretive delight" (*L5* 697), was inspired by Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*. *Queen Mab; A Philosophical Poem: With Notes* (1813) set the ground for Shelley's theory of revolution. The seventeen notes treat such issues as republicanism, vegetarianism, and atheism. TSE objected to the "philosophy of *Epipsychidion*" (1821) in *UPUC* (4.642-43).

8. Vivante focuses on "some less general, yet not less radical aspects of the ever-originating power of thought" in Shelley (134-35), such as "novelty and universality," "liberty," "infinity," and illustrates them with examples from Shelley's poems (134-49).

9. On pp. 325-30, Vivante takes issue with Collingwood's argument, expounded in the chapter "Imagination and Consciousness" of *The Principles of Art*, that "we have no direct or introspective knowledge about sensation, but only about our more elaborate thought upon it" (330).

Introduction to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain)

London: The Cresset Press, 1950. Pp. xvi + 291; Introduction, vii-xvi.[1]

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is the only one of Mark Twain's various books which can be called a masterpiece. I do not suggest that it is his only book of permanent interest; but it is the only one in which his genius is completely realized, and the only one which creates its own category. There are pages in *Tom Sawyer* and in *Life on the Mississippi* which are, within their limits, as good as anything with which one can compare them in *Huckleberry Finn*;[2] and in other books there are drolleries just as good of their kind. But when we find one book by a prolific author which is very much superior to all the rest, we look for the peculiar accident or concourse of accidents which made that book possible. In the writing of *Huckleberry Finn* Mark Twain had two elements which, when treated with his sensibility and his experience, formed a great book: these two are the Boy and the River.

Huckleberry Finn is, no doubt, a book which boys enjoy. I cannot speak from memory: I suspect that a fear on the part of my parents lest I should acquire a premature taste for tobacco, and perhaps other habits of the hero of the story, kept the book out of my way. But *Huckleberry Finn* does not fall into the category of juvenile fiction. The opinion of my parents that it was a book unsuitable for boys left me, for most of my life, under the impression that it was a book suitable only for boys. Therefore it was only a few years ago that I read for the first time, and in that order, *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*.

Tom Sawyer did not prepare me for what I was to find its sequel to be. *Tom Sawyer* seems to me to be a boys' book, and a very good one. The River and *the* Boy make their appearance in it; the narrative is good; and there is also a very good picture of society in a small mid-Western river town (for St. Petersburg is more Western than Southern) a hundred years ago. But the point of view of the narrator is that of an adult observing a boy. And Tom is the ordinary boy, though of quicker wits, and livelier imagination, than most. Tom is, I suppose, very much the boy that Mark Twain had been: he is remembered and described as he seemed to his elders, rather than created.

Huck Finn, on the other hand, is the boy that Mark Twain still was, at the time of writing his adventures. We look at Tom as the smiling adult does: Huck we do not look at – we see the world through his eyes. The two boys are not merely different types; they were brought into existence by different processes. Hence in the second book their roles are altered. In the first book Huck is merely the humble friend – almost a variant of the traditional valet of comedy; and we see him as he is seen by the conventional respectable society to which Tom belongs, and of which, we feel sure, Tom will one day become an eminently respectable and conventional member. In the second book their nominal relationship remains the same; but here it is Tom who has the secondary role. The author was probably not conscious of this, when he wrote the first two chapters: *Huckleberry Finn* is not the kind of story in which the author knows, from the beginning, what is going to happen. Tom then disappears from our view; and when he returns, he has only two functions. The first is to provide a foil for Huck. Huck's persisting admiration for Tom only exhibits more clearly to our eyes the unique qualities of the former and the commonplaceness of the latter. Tom has the imagination of a lively boy who has read a good deal of romantic fiction: he might, of course, become a writer – he might become Mark Twain. Or rather, he might become the more commonplace aspect of Mark Twain. Huck has not imagination, in the sense in which Tom has it: he has, instead, vision. He sees the real world; and he does not judge it – he allows it to judge itself.

Tom Sawyer is an orphan. But he has his aunt; he has, as we learn later, other relatives; and he has the environment into which he fits. He is wholly a social being. When there is a secret band to be formed, it is Tom who organizes it and prescribes the rules. Huck Finn is alone: there is no more solitary character in fiction. The fact that he has a father only emphasizes his loneliness; and he views his father with a terrifying detachment. So we come to see Huck himself in the end as one of the permanent symbolic figures of fiction; not unworthy to take a place with Ulysses, Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Hamlet and other great discoveries that man has made about himself.

It would seem that Mark Twain was a man who – perhaps like most of us – never became in all respects mature. We might even say that the adult side of him was boyish, and that only the boy in him, that was Huck Finn, was adult. As Tom Sawyer grown up, he wanted success and applause (Tom himself always needs an audience). He wanted prosperity, a happy domestic life of a conventional kind, universal approval, and fame. All of these

things he obtained. As Huck Finn he was indifferent to all these things; and being composite of the two, Mark Twain both strove for them, and resented their violation of his integrity. Hence he became the humorist and even clown: with his gifts, a certain way to success, for everyone could enjoy his writings without the slightest feeling of discomfort, self-consciousness or self-criticism. And hence, on the other hand, his pessimism and misanthropy. To be a misanthrope is to be in some way divided; or it is a sign of an uneasy conscience. The pessimism which Mark Twain discharged into *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg* and *What is Man?* springs less from observation of society, than from his hatred of himself for allowing society to tempt and corrupt him and give him what he wanted.[3] There is no wisdom in it. But all this personal problem has been diligently examined by Mr. Van Wyck Brooks; and it is not Mark Twain, but *Huckleberry Finn*, that is the subject of this introduction.[4]

You cannot say that Huck himself is either a humorist or a misanthrope. He is the impassive observer: he does not interfere, and, as I have said, he does not judge. Many of the episodes that occur on the voyage down the river, after he is joined by the Duke and the King (whose fancies about themselves are akin to the kind of fancy that Tom Sawyer enjoys) are in themselves farcical; and if it were not for the presence of Huck as the reporter of them, they would be no more than farce. But, seen through the eyes of Huck, there is a deep human pathos in these scoundrels. On the other hand, the story of the feud between the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons is a masterpiece in itself: yet Mark Twain could not have written it so, with that economy and restraint, with just the right details and no more, and leaving to the reader to make his own moral reflections, unless he had been writing in the person of Huck. And the *style* of the book, which is the style of Huck, is what makes it a far more convincing indictment of slavery than the sensationalist propaganda of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.[5] Huck is passive and impassive, apparently always the victim of events; and yet, in his acceptance of his world and of what it does to him and others, he is more powerful than his world, because he is more *aware* than any other person in it.

Repeated readings of the book only confirm and deepen one's admiration of the consistency and perfect adaptation of the writing. This is a style which at the period, whether in America or in England, was an innovation, a new discovery in the English language. Other authors had achieved natural speech in relation to particular characters – Scott with characters

talking Lowland Scots, Dickens with cockneys: but no one else had kept it up through the whole of a book. Thackeray's Yellowplush, impressive as he is, is an obvious artifice in comparison.[6] In *Huckleberry Finn*, there is no exaggeration of grammar or spelling or speech, there is no sentence or phrase to destroy the illusion that these are Huck's own words. It is not only in the way in which he tells his story, but in the details he remembers, that Huck is true to himself. There is, for instance, the description of the Grangerford interior as Huck sees it on his arrival; there is the list of the objects which Huck and Jim salvaged from the derelict house:

> We got an old tin lantern, and a butcher knife without any handle, and a bran-new Barlow knife worth two bits in any store, and a lot of tallow candles, and a tin candle-stick, and a gourd, and a tin cup, and a ratty old bed-quilt off the bed, and a reticule with needles and pins and beeswax and buttons and thread and all such truck in it, and a hatchet and some nails, and a fish-line as thick as my little finger, with some monstrous hooks on it, and a roll of buckskin, and a leather dog-collar, and a horseshoe, and some vials of medicine that didn't have no label on them; and just as we was leaving I found a tolerable good curry-comb, and Jim he found a ratty old fiddle-bow and a wooden leg. The straps was broke off of it, but barring that, it was a good enough leg, though it was too long for me and not long enough for Jim, and we couldn't find the other one, though we hunted all around.
>
> And so, take it all around, we made a good haul. [50-51]

This is the sort of list that a boy reader should pore over with delight; but the paragraph performs other functions of which the boy reader would be unaware. It provides the right counterpoise to the horror of the wrecked house and the corpse; it has a grim precision which tells the reader all he needs to know about the way of life of the human derelicts who had used the house; and (especially the wooden leg, and the fruitless search for its mate) reminds us at the right moment of the kinship of mind and the sympathy between the boy outcast from society and the negro fugitive from the injustice of society.

Huck in fact would be incomplete without Jim, who is almost as notable a creation as Huck himself. Huck is the passive observer of men and events, Jim the submissive sufferer from them; and they are equal in dignity. There is no passage in which their relationship is brought out more clearly than the conclusion of the chapter in which, after the two have become separated

in the fog, Huck in the canoe and Jim on the raft, Huck, in his impulse of boyish mischief, persuades Jim for a time that the latter had dreamt the whole episode.

> ". . . my heart wuz mos' broke bekase you wuz los', en I didn' k'yer no mo' what become er me en de raf'. En when I wake up en fine you back agin', all safe en soun', de tears come en I could a got down on my knees en kiss' yo' foot I's so thankful. En all you wuz thinkin' 'bout wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is *trash*; en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey fren's en makes 'em ashamed." . . .
>
> It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger – but I done it, and I warn't ever sorry for it afterwards, neither. [85-86][7]

This passage has been quoted before; and if I quote it again, it is because I wish to elicit from it one meaning that is, I think, usually overlooked. What is obvious in it is the pathos and dignity of Jim, and this is moving enough; but what I find still more disturbing, and still more unusual in literature, is the pathos and dignity of the boy, when reminded so humbly and humiliatingly, that his position in the world is not that of other boys, entitled from time to time to a practical joke; but that he must bear, and bear alone, the responsibility of a man.

It is Huck who gives the book style. The River gives the book its form. But for the River, the book might be only a sequence of adventures with a happy ending. A river, a very big and powerful river, is the only natural force that can wholly determine the course of human peregrination. At sea, the wanderer may sail or be carried by winds and currents in one direction or another; a change of wind or tide may determine fortune. In the prairie, the direction of movement is more or less at the choice of the caravan; among mountains there will often be an alternative, a guess at the most likely pass. But the river with its strong, swift current is the dictator to the raft or to the steamboat. It is a treacherous and capricious dictator.[8] At one season, it may move sluggishly in a channel so narrow that, encountering it for the first time at that point, one can hardly believe that it has travelled already for hundreds of miles, and has yet many hundreds of miles to go; at another season, it may obliterate the low Illinois shore to a horizon of water, while in its bed it runs with a speed such that no man or beast can survive in it. At such times, it carries down human bodies, cattle and houses.[9] At least twice, at St. Louis, the

western and the eastern shores have been separated by the fall of bridges, until the designer of the great Eads Bridge devised a structure which could resist the floods.[10] In my own childhood, it was not unusual for the spring freshet to interrupt railway travel; and then the traveller to the East had to take steamboat from the levee up to Alton, at a higher level on the Illinois shore, before he could begin his rail journey. The river is never wholly chartable; it changes its pace, it shifts its channel, unaccountably; it may suddenly efface a sandbar, and throw up another bar where before was navigable water.

It is the River that controls the voyage of Huck and Jim; that will not let them land at Cairo, where Jim could have reached freedom; it is the River that separates them and deposits Huck for a time in the Grangerford household; the River that re-unites them, and then compels upon them the unwelcome company of the King and the Duke. Recurrently we are reminded of its presence and its power.

> When I woke up I didn't know where I was, for a minute. I set up and looked around, a little scared. Then I remembered. The river looked miles and miles across. The moon was so bright I could a counted the drift logs that went a-slipping along, black and still, hundreds of yards out from shore. Everything was dead quiet, and it looked late, and *smelt* late. You know what I mean – I don't know the words to put it in. [34]

> It was kind of solemn, drifting down the big still river, laying on our backs looking up at the stars, and we didn't ever feel like talking loud, and it warn't often that we laughed, only a little kind of a low chuckle. We had mighty good weather, as a general thing, and nothing ever happened to us at all, that night, nor the next, nor the next.
>
> Every night we passed towns, some of them away up on black hillsides, nothing but just a shiny bed of lights, not a house could you see. The fifth night we passed St. Louis, and it was like the whole world lit up. In St. Petersburg they used to say there was twenty or thirty thousand people in St. Louis, but I never believed it till I see that wonderful spread of lights at two o'clock that still night. There warn't a sound there; everybody was asleep. [64-65]

We come to understand the River by seeing it through the eyes of the Boy; but the Boy is also the spirit of the River. *Huckleberry Finn*, like other great works of imagination, can give to every reader whatever he is capable of taking from it. On the most superficial level of observation, Huck is

convincing as a boy. On the same level, the picture of social life on the shores of the Mississippi a hundred years ago is, I feel sure, accurate. On any level, Mark Twain makes you see the River, as it is and was and always will be, more clearly than the author of any other description of a river known to me. But you do not merely see the River, you do not merely become acquainted with it through the senses: you experience the River. Mark Twain, in his later years of success and fame, referred to his early life as a steamboat pilot as the happiest he had known.[11] With all allowance for the illusions of age, we can agree that those years were the years in which he was most fully alive. Certainly, but for his having practised that calling, earned his living by that profession, he would never have gained the understanding which his genius for expression communicates in this book. In the pilot's daily struggle with the River, in the satisfaction of activity, in the constant attention to the River's unpredictable vagaries, his consciousness was fully occupied, and he absorbed knowledge of which, as an artist, he later made use. There are, perhaps, only two ways in which a writer can acquire the understanding of environment which he can later turn to account: by having spent his childhood in that environment – that is, living in it at a period of life in which one experiences much more than one is aware of; and by having had to struggle for a livelihood in that environment – a livelihood bearing no direct relation to any intention of writing about it, of *using* it as literary material. Most of Joseph Conrad's understanding came to him in the latter way. Mark Twain knew the Mississippi in both ways: he had spent his childhood on its banks, and he had earned his living matching his wits against its currents.

Thus the River makes the book a great book. As with Conrad, we are continually reminded of the power and terror of Nature, and the isolation and feebleness of Man. Conrad remains always the European observer of the tropics, the white man's eye contemplating the Congo and its black gods.[12] But Mark Twain is a native, and the River God is his God. It is as a native that he accepts the River God, and it is the subjection of Man that gives to Man his dignity. For without some kind of God, Man is not even very interesting.

Readers sometimes deplore the fact that the story descends to the level of *Tom Sawyer* from the moment that Tom himself re-appears. Such readers protest that the escapades invented by Tom, in the attempted "rescue" of Jim, are only a tedious development of themes with which we were already too familiar – even while admitting that the escapades themselves are very

amusing, and some of the incidental observations memorable.[13*] But it is right that the mood of the end of the book should bring us back to that of the beginning. Or, if this was not the right ending for the book, what ending would have been right?

In *Huckleberry Finn* Mark Twain wrote a much greater book than he could have known he was writing. Perhaps all great works of art mean much more than the author could have been aware of meaning: certainly, *Huckleberry Finn* is the one book of Mark Twain's which, as a whole, has this unconsciousness. So what seems to be the rightness, of reverting at the end of the book to the mood of *Tom Sawyer*, was perhaps unconscious art. For Huckleberry Finn, neither a tragic nor a happy ending would be suitable. No worldly success or social satisfaction, no domestic consummation would be worthy of him; a tragic end also would reduce him to the level of those whom we pity. Huck Finn must come from nowhere and be bound for nowhere. His is not the independence of the typical or symbolic American Pioneer, but the independence of the vagabond. His existence questions the values of America as much as the values of Europe; he is as much an affront to the "pioneer spirit" as he is to "business enterprise"; he is in a state of nature as detached as the state of the saint. In a busy world, he represents the loafer; in an acquisitive and competitive world, he insists on living from hand to mouth. He could not be exhibited in any amorous encounters or engagements, in any of the juvenile affections which are appropriate to Tom Sawyer. He belongs neither to the Sunday School nor to the Reformatory. He has no beginning and no end. Hence, he can only disappear; and his disappearance can only be accomplished by bringing forward another performer to obscure the disappearance in a cloud of whimsicalities.

Like Huckleberry Finn, the River itself has no beginning or end. In its beginning, it is not yet the River; in its end, it is no longer the River. What we call its headwaters is only a selection from among the innumerable sources which flow together to compose it. At what point in its course does the Mississippi become what the Mississippi *means*? It is both one and many;[14] it is the Mississippi of this book only after its union with the Big Muddy – the Missouri; it derives some of its character from the Ohio, the Tennessee and other confluents. And at the end it merely disappears among its deltas: it is no longer there, but it is still where it was, hundreds of miles to the North. The River cannot tolerate any design, to a story which is its story, that might interfere with its dominance. Things must merely happen, here and there, to the people who live along its shores or who commit themselves to its

current. And it is as impossible for Huck as for the River to have a beginning or end – a *career*. So the book has the right, the only possible concluding sentence. I do not think that any book ever written ends more certainly with the right words:

> But I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and civilize me, and I can't stand it. I been there before. [292]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Published on 25 Sept 1950 by the Cresset Press, founded in 1927 by Denis Cohen as a fine arts press before turning in the mid-1930s to literary works and editions by British and American authors. TSE's friend and housemate, John Hayward, served the press as consultant and general editor and likely proposed him for the introduction. TSE had accepted the commission by 23 Jan 1949, when he wrote to the American writer S. J. Perelman, regarding a possible meeting in America in 1950, "that I should write my Preface to Huckleberry Finn beforehand." On 14 Feb 1949, he explained to Leonard Woolf that he could not write an introduction to Cavafy's poems for him because "Denis Cohen would be justified in saying that I ought to be doing his *Huckleberry Finn* instead of something else" (Reading). As late as 9 May 1950 he confessed to Joseph Chiari: "I have two prefaces on which I should be working," one on the Faber volume of Vivante's *English Poetry* (7.495) and the other, referenced more obliquely, on the Cresset Press volume, "one which I agreed to do for what seemed to me overriding reasons." The TS of the introduction includes a typed note by TSE on which John Hayward wrote in pencil "May 1950" (King's H20).

2. Tom Sawyer is the title character of Mark Twain's novel *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), which tells the story of a boy who befriends an escaped slave and recounts their adventures in their journey down the Mississippi River. He appears in three other novels by Twain: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), *Tom Sawyer Abroad* (1894), and *Tom Sawyer, Detective* (1896). In his memoir *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) Mark Twain details his time as a young steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River from 1857 to 1861.

3. Twain wrote *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg* (1899), a story about the easy corruption of the supposedly incorruptible town of Hadleyburg, while he lectured in Europe in 1898. The lecture tour was meant to help him recoup financial losses incurred from his recent investment in the unsuccessful Paige typesetting machine. The pessimism in *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg* is often ascribed to Twain's personal adversities in the 1890s. *What Is Man?* (1906) is a dialogue between a young and an older man, in which the latter argues that man, an impersonal machine directed by exterior influences, acts only out of self-interest.

4. In "American Critics" (1929), TSE defined Van Wyck Brooks as the "genteeler sort" of "a more impatient group of critics of America," citing his two books *The Wine of the Puritans* (1908) and *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1920) as exemplars of his work (3.569). In the latter, Brooks examined Twain's literary progression and claimed that "Mark Twain was a frustrated spirit, a victim of arrested development" (25), concluding that "Mark Twain's attack upon the failure of human life was merely a rationalization of the failure in himself" (258).

5. The novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life among the Lowly* (1852) by American writer Harriet Beecher Stowe focuses on the black slave Uncle Tom and offers a vivid portrayal of slavery and its incompatibility with Christian principles.

6. In the Waverley Novels (1814-32), Walter Scott used vernacular dialogue in Lowland Scots, a language spoken in Lowland Scotland. The term *cockney* refers to people from the East End of London and their dialect or accent. In Charles Dickens's novels, many characters speak cockney, for example, Sam Weller in *The Pickwick Papers* and the Artful Dodger in *Oliver Twist*. TSE himself used cockney in the choruses from *The Rock* (1934) and would do so again in 1951 in "Cat Morgan Introduces Himself" (*CPP* 236 / *Poems2* 35). "The Yellowplush Papers" (1837), a series of comic sketches by William Makepeace Thackeray, takes the form of memoirs of Charles James Yellowplush, a footman who recounts his tales in aspirating cockney idiom using original spelling.

7. Sending the typescript of the introduction to John Hayward in May 1950, TSE enclosed the following typed note: "Subject to minor polishing and correction. / But if I'd 'a' knowed what a trouble it was to make a book I wouldn't 'a' tackled it, and ain't a-going to no more. But I reckon I got to light out for the territory ahead of the rest" (King's H20).

8. See the beginning of *The Dry Salvages*: "I do not know much about gods; but I think that the river / Is a strong brown god – sullen, untamed and intractable, / Patient to some degree, at first recognised as a frontier" (*CPP* 184 / *Poems1* 193).

9. See *The Dry Salvages*: "Like the river with its cargo of dead negroes, cows and chicken coops, / The bitter apple, and the bite in the apple" (*CPP* 187 / *Poems1* 197).

10. The Eads Bridge was the first substantial bridge to cross the Mississippi River at St. Louis, connecting St. Louis, Missouri, and East St. Louis, Illinois. The bridge was completed in 1874 and named after its designer and builder James Buchanan Eads (1820-87). TSE recalled in a letter to Marquis W. Childs of 8 Aug 1930: "The river also made a deep impression on me; and it was a great treat to be taken down to the Eades Bridge in flood time" (4.194; *L5* 281).

11. TSE may have derived this information from Van Wyck Brooks: "For idealize it he certainly did: all his days he looked back upon those four years on the Mississippi as upon a lost paradise" (*The Ordeal of Mark Twain*, 27).

12. From 1874 to 1894, Joseph Conrad sailed, first with the French Merchant Marine and then with the British Merchant Navy, to many parts of the world. In 1890, he traveled up the Congo River overland and in a paddle-steamer, a journey that later formed the basis of his novella "Heart of Darkness" (1899), from which TSE took the original epigraph for *The Waste Land* (*WLF* [3]) and the epigraph for "The Hollow Men" (*CPP* [81] / *Poems1* [79]).

13*. TSE's note: "*e.g.* '*Jim* don't know anybody in China.'" *Read*: "*Jim* don't know nobody in China" (244).

14. See *Little Gidding*: "I caught the sudden look of some dead master / Whom I had known, forgotten, half recalled / Both one and many" (*CPP* 193 / *Poems1* 204).

The Aims of Education

1. Can "Education" Be Defined?[1]

A well-known divine, in a recent volume[2]* devoted to the sort of problems with which I shall be here concerned, has pronounced a judgment which I have tried to take to heart. "It is," he says, "unfortunately true that most educators do not sufficiently ignore literary dabblers but are, rather, unduly impressed by them." He had preceded this harsh warning, to be sure, by a sentence which is less disturbing; he had just remarked: "If the physical scientists, the religionists, the naturalists, the artists, and the students of human contacts could unite to bestow upon them [i.e., the literary dabblers] the privilege of talking exclusively to one another and could turn jointly to the reconsideration of what constitutes true education, to the restoration of sound thinking based upon adequate experience, there would be less confusion of mind in educational circles and more of that mutually helpful cooperation which properly exists between those who, by various methods and by complementary avenues, are seeking the one Truth." I am not sure whether, in the present context, I am to be regarded as an artist or as a literary dabbler. Between helpful contribution and ignorant interference there may be a very narrow line indeed; and I must accept the risk if I am to say anything at all.

Education is a subject on which we all feel that we have something to say. We have all been educated, more or less; and we have, most of us, complaints to make about the defects of our own education; and we all like to blame our educators, or the system within which they were compelled to work, for our failure to educate ourselves. And the literary dabbler has sometimes dabbled in teaching as well. I have been a master at a grammar school for one term, and for a year at a school for little boys; for three years of my life I conducted an Adult Education class once a week; at one time I was an Assistant in Philosophy taking weekly tutorial groups, and at a much later age I was responsible for a course for undergraduates in the subject – God forgive me – of Contemporary English Literature.[3] I do not include the various series of public lectures which I have given at universities, because no one has to pass an examination on such lectures, and therefore they are no part of education. And I mention my nominal qualifications only to

affirm that in my opinion they are, for my present task, no qualifications at all.

A couple of years ago I produced a book called *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* – a title which some readers declared to be pretentious and pedantic, and others declared to be evidence of mock-modesty. In this book I included, perhaps somewhat irrelevantly, a chapter treating a selection of what I believed to be current fallacies of educational theory.[4] The chapter could not pretend to any unity or structure other than that of enumeration; and perhaps its chief function was to appease the feeling of irritation with a good deal of nonsense that had been talked and written in England during the war years. Having relieved the emotions with which my mind – or my liver – was charged, I felt much better; and thought that I should never be impelled to return to this subject. But, unfortunately, this chapter caught the eye of a very distinguished educator,[5]* who, after a few polite commendations, exposed me publicly as the author of a mass of contradictions; and, in effect, called upon me to produce something more coherent or make my apology. Well, this is an attempt to do a little of both.

I immediately recognized one fault: that while, in the earlier and I hope better composed part of the book, I had attempted to distinguish between at least three different though closely related meanings which the word *culture* has in different contexts, I had used the word *education* without bothering to analyze it in the same way. Yet it is immediately obvious that the word *education* means something different, to begin with, when we are talking of what is *offered* and when we are talking of what is *received*; when we are talking of education as something done to people and when we mean what they do for themselves. We may mean the machine, or we may mean the contact of an apt pupil with the right teacher.

Here I must make an excursion. I have already exposed my willingness to risk the reputation of a literary dabbler in Education; I must risk that of a literary dabbler in semantics and semasiology.[6] This is a still more forbidden preserve than Education; but the world is now so full of highly specialized subjects, the landscape is so completely divided into prohibited areas, with notice boards warning us that we must keep out, or that trespassers will be prosecuted, or simply to Beware of the Bull, that the literary dabbler is goaded to recklessness. So I shall mark off what I have to say on this subject – and abandon it later if it exposes me to too much derision – by entitling it "Notes towards the Definition of Runcibility," or "MacTaggart Refuted."[7]

The late John MacTaggart Ellis MacTaggart was a philosopher at Trinity College, Cambridge, who enjoyed a considerable reputation in his day. I have never read any of his works, but I believe that he was an Hegelian; an exponent of a philosophy now out of favor, except in the form of Dialectical Materialism.[8] But it is said to have been Mr. MacTaggart who offered the explanation that the word *runcible* means *tortoise-shell*. He based this interpretation upon two loci, one in *The Owl and the Pussycat*, and the other in *The Pobble Who Has No Toes*. You will remember that the Owl and the Pussycat ate their wedding feast with a runcible spoon; and that the Pobble's Aunt Jobiska had a runcible cat with crimson whiskers.[9] Recognizing that tortoise-shell spoons are sometimes made, and that tortoise-shell cats sometimes occur, MacTaggart affirmed that *tortoise-shell* was the only adjective applicable to both cats and spoons. Now, the question whether there is or is not any other adjective in the language applicable to both cats and spoons is one I do not raise: I am ready to accept MacTaggart's findings on this point. Nor do I rest my objection on his inadequate knowledge of the works of Edward Lear; I mean, on the fact that in another poem Lear describes himself as going forth "in a runcible hat."[10] It would be easy for any disciple of MacTaggart to get round that with a footnote suggesting that Lear was an eccentric – which can hardly be denied – and that anyone like Lear might well have worn the shell of a tortoise as a hat; pointing out, incidentally, the similarity of shape between the shell of a tortoise and the academic headdress of doctors of letters at some English universities. No, I maintain that MacTaggart's method was wrong from the start.

It is a commonplace that the same word may develop two meanings which have no relation to each other except that of derivation from one root. Compare the verb *évincer* in French, meaning "to eject, to dispossess," with the word *evince* in English, meaning nowadays "to display, exhibit, manifest." They both meant originally "conquer" – they both started, that is, faithful to the meaning of the Latin from which they were formed. The modern use of the French verb is primarily legal. But the English verb has an interesting history. In the early sixteenth century, when it still meant "overcome, prevail over," it meant also "convince" – overcoming in argument (of course, "convince" retains the significance of victory), and to "confute." A little later, it appears as "constrain, extort"; at the same time it could mean "establish" or "vindicate." Towards the end of the eighteenth century it appears to make a sudden leap into meaning "to make evident or manifest." This leap is not so puzzling as it might seem, when we look at the quotation

illustrating this meaning in the O.E.D., taken from the *Voyages of Captain Cook* (1790): "Their pacific disposition is thoroughly evinced, from their friendly reception of all strangers." Here the meaning of 1790, "to make evident or manifest," is not very remote from one meaning of 1610: "to prove by argument or evidence." And "to make evident or manifest" gives an easy transition to the use from the early nineteenth century to the present day, that of "display, exhibit, manifest." Thus, the transition of a word from one meaning to another may be easy, natural, and certainly in the history of *evince*, reasonable; each transition may be so imperceptible that the authors – and, we must not forget, the unremembered speakers – responsible for it may be unaware that they are committing any novelty: and yet it is a long way from the Latin verb *evincere*, to conquer, and the English verbs *exhibit* or *manifest*, which come from different roots. And there is a wide gulf between the meaning today of the English *evince* and the French *évincer*.

There is an obvious utility in acquainting ourselves with the history of important words, because without this understanding we are always reading modern meanings into the older texts of English literature. It is as necessary as it is to know, for example, that *suspenders* in England hold up socks, and that in America they support *pants*, which are held up in England by *braces*, and are not called *pants*, because that term is reserved for the garment underneath the American pants. But besides the variations of meaning of the same word in the same place at different times, and at the same time in different places, there is the still more important variation of meaning of the same word at the same time in the same place. Before proceeding farther, I want to suggest that this wobbliness of words is not something to be deplored. We should not try to pin a word down to one meaning, which it should have at all times, in all places, and for everybody. Of course there must be many words in a language which are relatively at least fixed always to one meaning. To say nothing of scientific terms, there are many substantives which name concrete objects and must have meant essentially the same thing throughout the history of the language: such as those two words which used to be employed by philosophers when they were considering whether anything existed or not – namely, *table* and *chair*.[11] But there are also many words which *must* change their meaning, because it is their changes in meaning that keep a language *alive*, or rather, that indicate that the language *is* alive. If they did not change, it would mean either that we were living exactly the same life as our ancestors (the rate of change in the meanings of words in the language of a primitive tribe I should expect, other things being equal, to be very slow)

or else that our language was no longer adequate to our needs – in which case, the more progressive language of some neighbor might supplant it.

Related to the change of meaning of words from one generation to another, are the variations of meaning which they may come to have at the same time, and it is these variations with which I am here concerned. When two words from the same root have acquired such diverse meanings in two different languages as *évincer* and *evince*, they are virtually two different words. The confusion would be intolerable if *evince* in English meant *both* "to dispossess" and "to manifest." But there are many words which we must use in slightly different senses in different contexts; and the difference in meaning, though slight, may be very important. A great many of our confusions in thought arise from our not observing that we are using the same word in several senses.

Now to come back for a moment to the word *runcible*. It is a nonsense word, but I think we can learn something about "sense words" from examining nonsense words. Lewis Carroll's "portmanteau" words, like *slithy*, *gimble*, and *wabe*, are not pure nonsense words, for he defined their meaning; neither is Edward Lear's *spongetaneous*.[12] But *runcible*, so far as I can discover, is a pure nonsense word: being such, it has no root. It cannot be defined.[13] But I should deny that there was no relationship between his three uses of the same word. The rightness of the word, in each of these uses, the fact that it satisfies us as applicable to objects so different as a cat, a spoon, and a hat, is something that our sensibility acknowledges; we also feel that in each use there is a different shade of meaning. It is the nonsense shadow of the kind of word with which I am concerned, and so it cannot mean *tortoise-shell*. And incidentally, Lear was a poet; so, if he had meant *tortoise-shell*, he would probably have said *tortoise-shell*.

The word I am after, of course, is *education*. In the book in which I indiscreetly committed myself to a chapter of notes on education, I made, as I have just said, some effort to distinguish three senses in which we use the word *culture*: meaning something a little different when we are speaking of the individual, the group, or the society as a whole. I maintained that it would not do to have three different words, or even to say always "culture A, B, or C," because these meanings interpenetrate each other and give significance to each other; but that we must be constantly on guard not to make statements about one category which are applicable only to another. It is possible that I have done so myself, even in chapters in which I was trying to distinguish. We can hardly avoid occasionally misleading our readers, for it is more than we can do always to avoid misleading ourselves. And we must

remember that the meaning of a word is never wholly represented by its definition, that is, by other words; and that there is an implicit unity between all the meanings of a word like "culture" which cannot be wholly confined within a definition: this is the unity which we feel in going through the several definitions of the word in current use.

What I did not do, however, was to analyze the several meanings of "education." I do not think that any of the authors whose statements I was calling into question had done so either; but that is no excuse. Like the authors whom I criticized, I let it be assumed that "education" had one meaning only.[14]

Some light on the complexity of the meaning of the word can be found by examining, as we did with *evince*, the history of the word. I return to the O.E.D. The word *education* follows a pretty straight course, except for including the training of animals, and for one technical application to the training of silkworms.[15] It is first applied to the teaching of the very young: in fact, the first illustration given, dating from 1540, speaks of the education of infants one year old.[16] It then proceeds to the training of young persons with reference to the station they are to occupy in life: that is, to the fixed group.[17] (Early treatises on education, of course, were concerned with preparing young gentlemen for life at court.) It proceeds next to "the systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life"; also "the whole course of scholastic instruction which a person has received":[18] that is to say, the word develops along with schools and colleges; but it still has frequently a professional connotation – legal, for example, or medical. Finally, it becomes "culture, or development of powers, formation of character, as contrasted with the imparting of mere knowledge or skill."[19] And it is at this stage that we begin to get into difficulties over the meaning of the word in different contexts.

As time goes on, and a language ages, it becomes more difficult to find out what words mean, and whether they are meaning the same thing to different people. And when we use the *word* "education," we are probably using it either so comprehensively that in consequence of meaning everything, it denotes nothing, or else we have at the back of our minds one particular meaning. We may, for instance, be thinking of the "educated man." But the highest type of educated man is not simply a man who has been through the best educational institutions; he is, to begin with, more educable than most, and is one who has done much to educate himself since he ceased to be a pupil. We may mean by the educated man, one who is very highly trained and highly proficient in some very narrow specialty; or we

may mean a man who has had a good "all-round education" – which we then may proceed to sketch out, though we seldom agree as to what education is all-round, admitting that no one person has the time, even if he has the capacities, to be educated "all-round." When we think of the individual, we are apt, I believe, and rightly, to be stressing what the man does for himself, rather than what is done to him. And the perfectly educated man, like the perfectly cultured man, does not exist; and the kind of perfection in question differs according to the environment. It is easier to think in terms of the group. In earlier times, of which there remain vestiges, it was the *social* group; in our time it is more importantly the technical group. So long as you are concerned merely with a small group of the same social rank, the question of the purpose or meaning of education hardly arises. For the fact that all of the pupils have much the same background, have nominally the same religious allegiance, and will proceed to later activities within the same group, means that a great deal of "education" in the widest sense can be taken for granted or ignored. And where a technical education is concerned, its aim is clear, its success or failure can be measured; the only question is at what age to begin. The students will, no doubt, come from very different backgrounds, and will eventually scatter, to lead, apart from their professional activities, very different lives; but the question of what they should be taught, and in what order, is a manageable one. The real difficulty arises when the word *education* is taken in its most recent meaning, "culture, or development of powers, formation of character." For the meaning in relation to a social or professional group is distinguished by all the things that it is not; whereas in the widest sense, education covers the whole of life for the whole of society.

I am not objecting to this developed meaning of the word. I think it was inevitable with the development of society in magnitude, in complexity, and in organization, and with the pressure so evident in our own time, towards the conscious direction and centralization of more and more of life. But we have been forced into meaning all this by education, in an age when, being more conscious of our culture, we are more doubtful of it; and in an age when there are divergent views as to how character should be formed. And there is the increasing danger, that in applying this definition to the purposes of our educational institutions, we expect them to do for society what society ought to do for itself. And "culture, development of powers, formation of character," provide an especially hard task to be set before our educational institutions of the present day. These institutions are, in all countries, so vast; they bring together students of such different types; they have so many

departments; they are at the same time so highly organized and so formless. We can easily aim at more, and accomplish less, than our grandparents and great-grandparents did.

I should like to return to the list of the three ends of education suggested by Dr. C. E. M. Joad, which I criticized briefly in my book; because they seem to me as good as any three that I have seen given. They are:

> To enable a boy or girl to make his or her living.
> To equip him to play his part as a citizen of a democracy.
> To enable him to develop all the latent powers and faculties of his nature and so enjoy a good life.[20]

These make up, in fact, the professional, the social, and the individual aspects of education, in the terms in which Dr. Joad sees them. The first, the training for a livelihood, is certainly a permanent part of education. But it is, of course, to be interpreted in connection with the second and third. The livelihood has to fit in with the needs and requirements of society; it has also to be the sort of living for which the individual is best fitted by tastes and capacities. What is implied is a good society: for it is well-known that in most societies some highly important activities are underpaid or even discouraged. A good society, as well as a decent individual, is also implied by the third end, that of "developing the latent powers." For some of the latent powers might be evil, and the development of the individual's powers is not solely for his enjoyment of life: some of them should be beneficial, and the rest harmless to society.

So we get to the question, what sort of society should it be? I am not happy to say simply "in a democracy" as do Dr. Joad and others. In the first place, this is a statement to which every politician nowadays in every country would subscribe; and when everybody agrees on using the same word to describe totally different institutions, it becomes suspect. In the second place, as the word always suggests to everybody the particular kind of democracy in which he lives, the next step is to say "my democracy is more democratic than your democracy"; whereas it seems to me that each democratic country has to fashion a democracy which will differ in some respects from those of others, but may be equally "democratic." Next, a democracy worthy of the name seems to me a democracy of human beings, not simply of formal systems; much depends upon the citizens and those whom they choose to represent them. There may be a lack of accord between the formal institutions

and the ethos of the particular people that operates them; and for this reason, and because of corruption amongst those who make politics a profession, or indifference or ignorance or prejudice or ill-regulated emotion amongst the public, a democracy can sometimes work very badly.

We all agree on the affirmation that a democracy is the best possible aim for society; and the widest definition of democracy that *I* can find, is a society in which the maximum of responsibility is combined with the maximum of individual liberty. But we cannot leave it at that. For one thing, the concept of "responsibility" seems to imply that of "freedom"; and vice versa. One becomes responsible not simply by having tasks imposed which one cannot escape; for an individual to be truly responsible he must be free to shirk his responsibilities; and no one can be said to be truly "a free man" who is "irresponsible" – that is, at the mercy of his whims or appetites – a man who takes no responsibility for himself.

I should make it quite clear that I accept Dr. Joad's assertion that one of the aims of education should be to equip its products to play their parts as citizens of a democracy. When I say I accept it, I mean that any other assertion which contradicted it *within the same area of discourse* would be false. Such an assertion would be, for instance, that "one of the aims of education should be to equip its products to play their parts as citizens of an anti-democracy," or "it is not the business of education to form good citizens." What I want to recognize is simply, that a definition of one term is likely to involve the use of undefined defining terms. Now, this seems to be inevitable; it is a permanent condition of language and of thought. A definition is sufficient, when, for the purpose of using the defined term correctly, we do not need a further definition of the defining terms. It is inadequate and dangerous, when we extend the meaning of the defining terms to what was not in the intention of the definer – because there is always this limitation to a definition, that it is made by somebody, and is apprehended by somebody. There are areas of exact thought in which it does not matter who the definer was; but here we are not in one of those happy scientific paradises.

Now, in the assertion under examination, I think that it is necessary to assume that we mean the essence of democracy – that we are not selecting one meaning rather than another. It must mean all that I have suggested a few minutes ago: not merely a form of government, but a common ethos, a common way of responding emotionally, even common standards of conduct in private life. But the reader of such a definition is apt to respond to the word "democracy" merely with a few shreds of impressions of

conventions, elections, going to vote, and the like. If he proceeds to something more articulate, he may proceed to define democracy, either in a way that suggests to some readers that he doesn't mean democracy at all, or else in a way that leaves them unsatisfied. Dr. Edward Leen, an Irish theologian, in an interesting and commendable book *What Is Education*? says: "It is agreed that a certain acceptable meaning can be given to the statement that youth must be educated for democracy, provided we are clear as to what democracy means." He then goes on to tell us what he means. "*Democracy rightly understood*," he says, "*is nothing else than aristocracy*."[21] He should, I think, have said "aristocracy rightly understood," because he goes on to give his own meaning to "aristocracy." He means "an aristocracy of worth, not an aristocracy of accident." The admission to it, he says, is not by money or by birth, but by personal, moral, and intellectual effort.[22]

Now for one thing, this is not the common meaning of "aristocracy," and I am rather suspicious of attempts to change the common meaning by violence. But, for another, Dr. Leen has, it seems to me, merely pushed the problem a stage farther away without helping us to get there; for the problem of how to get the best men as rulers is one which remains to be solved. And furthermore, it does not seem to me ideally democratic, for it at least may suggest that society is sharply divisible into rulers and ruled; he has, it seems to me, limited his view of democracy to the political aspect.

It is beginning to appear that a formal definition of education, and a generalized statement of its purpose, is not to be easily come by. The statement "to equip boys and girls to play their part in a democracy" is evidently only a secondary purpose, unless we choose to restrict very narrowly the meaning of "education." For it is obvious that if this is an essential part of education, many of the greatest sages and scholars of the past cannot be called educated; and we must say this even of the fathers of democracy. As a secondary purpose, it must be accepted only with full awareness of its limitations and dangers. The chief danger is that, in a democratic society, education may come to be interpreted as *educational adaptation to environment*. Surely, no one is educated to play his part in a democracy, if he has merely been adapted to the particular routine of democracy in which he finds himself; he must be educated to criticize his own democracy, to measure it against what democracy should be, and to recognize the differences between what is proper and workable in one democracy and what is proper and workable in another. He must be adapted to it, certainly: for without being adapted to it, he cannot play a part in it, he can hardly survive in it. But he must not

be completely adapted to it in the form in which he finds it around him; for that would be to train a generation to be completely incapable of any change or improvement, unable to make discoveries or experiments, or to adapt itself to those changes which go on perpetually without anyone's having deliberately intended to bring them about. So "education for democracy" is not so simple a matter as it sounds when we first hear it.

We have seen that "training to earn a livelihood," which is one of the purposes of education, means training in a particular society: a livelihood is made in quite different ways in different societies, and even in the best societies some of the ways of making a livelihood are far from praiseworthy. And the third purpose of education, "to enable us to develop all the latent powers and faculties of our nature and so enjoy a good life," also has its full meaning only within the bounds of a particular society. If we mean by "a good life" the kind of life which that society considers good, we are committed to a program of complete adaptation; if we mean by it, a good life independent of the social limitations of place and time, we must have some other standard of goodness. And the development of *all* our latent powers (even if we confine ourselves to powers for *good*) is limited by the livelihood we have to earn, and the society in which we earn it. So it would seem that education must be partly a process of adaptation to our society as it is; partly a preparation for the sort of society we want it to become; and at the same time we are aware that education, and our responsibility towards those we educate, are not comprehended by our conception of our society as it is, however modified by what we aspire that it should be. What education would we design, for instance, for an individual destined to become a permanent Robinson Crusoe?[23] It would have to be pretty comprehensive, certainly, in practical skills: there is very little in the way of applied science that would come amiss; but his education would have to include, surely, some mental discipline, in the way of furnishing him with the mental and spiritual resources with which that hero was so well equipped, for enduring solitude. What education, on the other hand, would we design for pupils who we knew would have to live in a thoroughly *bad* society? Bad, not merely corrupt as all societies are, but organized towards evil? Our educators, fortunately, do not have to devise curricula for these situations; but unless our definition of education can give an answer to these two questions, it is not a complete definition.

I do not suggest that we ought to try to give a complete definition; I suggest only that it is well to recognize the incompleteness of any definition

that we give. The meaning of a word like "education" is, to begin with, more than the sum of the meanings given in the dictionary, meanings which are no more than an account of the uses to which a word has been put by writers throughout several centuries. But, when a language is alive, such words will constantly be used in new contexts; they acquire new associations and lose some of the old ones; and every great writer contributes something to the meaning of the key words which he uses, those which are characteristic of his personal style. Some of these uses of the word die with him, others enter into the common language. The process of enrichment of the meaning of a word cannot go on indefinitely, without some uses of it becoming obsolete and forgotten: partly because our minds cannot contain them all, even if we are acquainted with them through our study of literature, and partly because an indefinite extension of meaning would lead to ambiguity and confusion. It is one of the advantages of the study of a dead language that it is more manageable, that the words in it have come to the limit of their meaning: there they are in the texts, and their meaning can be no more than what the authors, during the time in which that language flourished, have given them. We do not want our language to become a dead language; yet we are always trying, and indeed must try, however vainly, if we are to think at all, to fix a permanent meaning for every word.

We all mean, by education, some training of the mind and generally of the body also – so that we can include training for sport as well as for skills directed to some further purpose. But we can have no clear or useful idea of what education is, unless we have some notion of what this training is *for*. Thus we come to inquire what is the purpose of education, and here we get deeply into the area of conflict. We can, as I have said, produce definitions which are valid within a limited but unstable context, as when we speak of "training to play our parts as citizens of a democracy." It is fortunate that there are areas of discourse within which we can agree that some of the words we use do not need to be defined, inasmuch as we are using the word in the same way – whatever that way is. But there is a point beyond which we become aware that the same proposition means something different to two people both accepting it – this happens very often in treaties and other political negotiations; and then we have to try to define one or more words which we had been employing under the impression that they meant the same thing to both of us. Just as a dogma may not have to be asserted until a heresy has appeared to provoke it, so a word may not need to be defined until we discover that two or more people are using it with a difference of meaning.

I do not suggest for a moment that we should abandon the attempt to define the purpose of education (and the definition of the purpose is an inevitable step from the definition of the word itself). If we see a new and mysterious machine, I think that the first question we ask is, "What is that machine *for*?" and afterwards we ask, "How does it do it?" But the moment we ask about the purpose of anything, we may be involving ourselves in asking about the purpose of everything. If we define education, we are led to ask "What is Man?"; and if we define the purpose of education, we are committed to the question "What is Man for?" Every definition of the purpose of education, therefore, implies some concealed, or rather implicit philosophy or theology. In choosing one definition rather than another, we are attracted to the one because it fits in better with our answer to the question "What is Man for?" We may not know what our own answer is, because it may be not fully conscious, and may be wholly unconscious; our answer is not always in our minds, but in the unconscious assumptions upon which we conduct the whole of our lives. The man who has made the definition which you accept or reject, wholly or in part, may be more aware or less aware of the implication of his definition than you are: at the moment when he makes the definition, and at the moment of your reaction to it, probably neither of you is aware of all that is beyond the margin of the field of discourse.

It might appear from what I have just been saying – if anything appears at all – that we ought to drop the question "What is education for?" and proceed to the question "What is Man for?" I do not know much about Man,[24] but I am sure that our minds do not and cannot work in that way. We cannot discuss ultimate problems in a vacuum; the whole of our mind, sensibility, and experience of life must be brought to bear upon them; part of our experience has been obtained in dealing with these secondary problems in their more limited contexts; and it is these secondary problems which provide us with the reasons for attacking the primary ones. Furthermore, the secondary problem is more nearly and obviously related to the practical questions which arise every day, and which have to be dealt with immediately in some fashion if we are to carry on at all. Nor do I deplore the fact that so many and various accounts of the purpose of education are given. We must go on inventing new ones. Each answer is a clue to what education means to somebody; an incentive to finding out what it means for oneself. If it meant exactly the same thing to everybody, the world would be a very dead place indeed; so we have no reason to deplore the fact, if we find the meaning of education as elusive as the meaning of the word *runcible*.

The Aims of Education

2. The Interrelation of Aims[25]

So far, we have accepted as the most convenient starting point Dr. Joad's list of the three aims of education: the professional, or, in the humblest way of putting it, training to earn a living; the social, or, in Dr. Joad's way of putting it, preparation for citizenship; and the individual, or, in Matthew Arnold's way of putting it, the pursuit of perfection.[26] But we cannot define education as merely the *sum* of these three activities; for if the term "education" is to cover all three and not be wholly applicable to any one of them separately, we must appreciate some relationship, or rather some mutual implication, between them, such that each, while it may still be called education, is not the whole of education by itself. We recognize that the choice of a livelihood is limited, first, by the capacities of the individual; and second, by the kinds of activity favored or discouraged by the society in which the individual finds himself, or in other words, the kinds of thing that people are prepared to pay a man to do. The choice of a livelihood involves some adaptation to the social milieu, although some men are willing to earn a very modest living in order to pursue a vocation which seems more worth while to them than it does to their neighbors. Furthermore, we observe that there are some ways of earning a living which are not in themselves commendable, and which we should not train people for: parasitical activities, which feed, at best, on the follies, and, at worst, on the vices of mankind. And this raises the question of moral criteria; so that the formula of earning a living is doubly inadequate, and we are led to both of the other aims on our list. Or, if we start from the formula "training for citizenship," that implies training to make a living; or, in a wider sense (including those persons, a few of whom still exist, who are able to live on unearned income), training in some useful activity. We can stretch the term "useful" very wide so as to include activities which to the great majority of mankind seem quite useless; but I think we must agree that the man who is, according to *every* standard of measurement, completely useless to society, is hardly a successful product of education. And I think we must agree that the best citizens are likely to be those who develop "the latent powers and faculties of their nature"; or at

least that any society which does not endeavor to make possible the development of the latent powers and faculties of those who have the best latent powers and faculties to develop has a very narrow and mediocre conception of citizenship, and will not be a society worth educating people for. Finally, the development of the latent powers and faculties depends upon the pursuit of the right activities, including the best occupation for a livelihood that the individual can find; and depends also upon the individual's finding himself in a society in which his powers and faculties can be nourished and can bear fruit. So each one of these aims of education leads to a process which can in the right context be called "education," though we cannot define education by any one of them alone. And each one of these paths leads inevitably to moral judgments and decisions which take us beyond the limits within which we should like to confine "education" if the subject is to be manageable.

The danger of the list, as a mere list, is that we cannot long retain all three of the items in equal balance in our minds, once we start trying to educate people. This is not only because, in consequence of attending to one, we are apt to overlook the others; it may be also that in practice the three aims happen sometimes to be incompatible, and we are forced to emphasize one rather than the other. And when we find we have gone too far to one extreme, the natural reaction is to go too far to the other.

When I first revisited universities, after the end of the war, I was told that the new generation – both of those whose higher education had been interrupted or deferred, and of those a few years younger coming straight from their schools – was much more serious than that which I had known in the thirties, and than that of undergraduates in my own time. I am speaking of universities in England, in America, and on the continent of Europe. And indeed, ocular evidence appeared to confirm this. On every quadrangle or campus, and in the streets of university towns, I saw earnest faces with concentrated expressions, of young people who seemed to be always in transit from lecture to lecture, from tutorial to their rooms, from their rooms to the library. It was suggested to me that the anxiety visible on every face was the anxiety about a future livelihood. They were anxious to learn, to learn as much as possible in the shortest time, in order to qualify themselves for the jobs which they were out to get as soon as they had their diplomas in their hands. Now it seems to me that in my time we were far less concerned, during the earlier academic years at least, with what we were going to do afterwards. There were, of course, the minority who, unlike myself, had

revealed a distinct bent, in scholarship or in some particular field of science, and were so devoted to their subjects that they looked forward already to a higher degree and to a lifetime of teaching the subject of their interest. But I do not think that even these were oppressed by the thought that they might have any difficulty in getting a job: they might not find a very good place to start with, but the future was open. They looked forward rather to earning a livelihood through their mastery of the subject they were interested in; but not so many of them were concerned simply with taking a degree as a necessary condition of getting a job of some kind they knew not what.

Now I am aware that many of my contemporaries left college having gained only the advantage of being three or four years older when they came to look for a job than they would have been had they not gone there. One profited, of course, from friendships, from extra-curricular activities, and from associating with men of one's own generation from various parts of America. But I am not at the moment concerned with incidental benefits, but with the formal tuition. And on the wrong side of the balance sheet, I must put the unrestraint of the free elective system as practiced in my time. By passing examinations in a certain number of wholly unrelated subjects one could, in three or four years, obtain the certificate of education – the diploma of bachelor of arts. The only limitation was that you could not follow two courses in the same year if their lecture hours coincided. I knew one man whose principle of choice of courses was that the lectures should all fall on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with no lecture on Saturday: thus, he was free to spend four days a week in New York. I should add that he did not follow even this course of study with sufficient application to qualify him for a degree, though he made a passing acquaintance with the appreciation of music, and with housing problems in mining communities. I am not, however, so much concerned with the effect of this system of education upon the idler, as with its effect upon the young man like myself, with a good deal of ill-regulated curiosity in out-of-the-way subjects, who took, for instance, a perverse pleasure in dabbling with late Latin and Greek authors without having mastered the real classics.[27] It is not the system of education promoted by those educators of the late nineteenth century whose notions had been developed in Germany that I am defending; what I regret is the disappearance of a state of mind among undergraduates themselves.[28] Those who were fundamentally serious minded, and not triflers, were able to pursue their studies for their own sake, simply because they cared for them. The change came from economic, social, and perhaps political

developments in the last forty years, which have been much accelerated in this decade; and, if conditions are the same today, one cannot urge students to abandon an attitude which has been forced upon them by circumstances. I only wish to make the point that while the three aims of education formulated by Dr. Joad are complementary to each other, they can also interfere with each other. This may become a little more intelligible if I suggest that the aim which a man sets before himself, in training himself to earn a living, and the aim he sets before himself, in working to develop and cultivate his mind and sensibility, are different in kind. The first is an aim in pursuing which you can keep consciously in mind both the end and the means. You decide on the general field in which you wish to find employment, and then follow the course of instruction laid down, or generally accepted as suitable preparation for that employment. But for that cultivation of powers and faculties which tends to make us educated men, apart from our professional occupations, disinterestedness is necessary: you have to pursue studies for their own sake, for the love of truth, or wisdom, or at least curiosity, ignoring any practical advantages which may come to you from mastering them.

Of course, I have oversimplified this problem. If a man is to excel in any profession, he must love the activity for its own sake; and its usefulness to society, and the financial and other rewards that it brings him, are merely justifications of it. Most of us, at least, find it necessary to persuade ourselves that the work we do is of some importance. But, on the other hand, the man who is narrowly concentrated in his own particular work is not wholly an educated man; he may be not only uncultivated, but in outside affairs an utter simpleton. Most of us have to sacrifice possibilities of educating ourselves beyond some point simply because we have not the time for it if we are to get our work done. On the other hand, the man who does not concentrate on work of his own, but pursues his education in various directions, will be only a dilettante. In the world there is room for both the narrow specialist and the dilettante. But the fact that there are different aptitudes and functions in a world in which we have to be tolerant of others does not solve the educational problem. And it seems to me that often, in our attempt to balance special training with general culture, we incline to methods of education which produce men and women highly trained in some narrow interest of science or scholarship, and smatterers in everything else; we tend to put them through a course of study which attempts to combine the technical institute with the young ladies' finishing school. For if "training to earn a living" and the "development of all the latent

powers and faculties" are treated simply as two unrelated disciplines to which every pupil must be subjected, the latter will be no more than useful as a kind of recreation. When we see that we perform our specialized work all the more intelligently because of seeing it in relation to the work of all sorts of other people, living and dead, who have devoted themselves to quite other types of work than our own, we are on our way to solving for ourselves – this means finding the right compromise for ourselves – the puzzle of the balance between those activities in which we participate, and those of which we can only hope to be an appreciative spectator.

Perhaps I can give this discussion more appearance of reality, or at least provide light relief in the way of something more apprehensible, by asking "What sort of education should a poet have?" I don't think any parents have ever brought up a child with a view to his becoming a poet; some parents have brought up their children to be criminals; but for good and loving parents a poet is almost the last thing they could want their child to be, unless they thought it was the only way of saving him from becoming a criminal. I suppose that poets, during their tender years, usually show an interest in language and expression, and give some indication of a bent for the study of languages rather than science. This is not always true; I have known men who in childhood seemed to their parents to give promise of becoming Humphry Davys or Clerk Maxwells, and suddenly shifted their interest to literature at fifteen or sixteen.[29] Certainly, the fact that a child writes verses is no indication whatever that he will become a poet. Nearly everybody has written verses: a wise parent should not discourage the habit, but should attach no specific significance to it. But if the young poet is of the usual kind, he will probably excel in languages, particularly his own; and is likely to be of the type which flourishes on Latin and Greek. Certainly, the poet in later life ought to be equipped with a good knowledge of Latin and Greek literature, make himself fluent in one modern language besides his own, and have a reading knowledge of several others. How few of us, however, satisfy that qualification: I certainly do not. But what else should he study, from the point at which it is evident at least that a literary education is the most suitable for him? In the first place, he usually has to make his living, and poetry is conspicuously the occupation by which no one can expect to make a living. For most men, there is the conflict between the claims of the occupation which they make their chief concern in life, and the claims of "the latent powers and faculties." But the poet has a threefold problem to solve: he must earn a living, he must practice and perfect himself in writing, and

he must cultivate other interests as well. He must do the last, not merely in order to exercise latent powers, in order to become a cultivated man; but because he must have these other interests in order to have something to write about. Almost no form of knowledge comes amiss (besides, of course, the knowledge of as much of the best poetry in several languages as he can assimilate) because without other intellectual interests his experience of men and women will be very limited. The condition is that everything should be grist that comes to his mill; that he should have a lively curiosity in what men have thought and done, and be interested in these things for their own sake. He is perpetually engaged in solving the problem that every man must solve for himself, that of relating every human activity to his own; and he cannot tell how much, or what, of the subjects he investigates will be directly useful to him as a poet. But his poetry will inevitably be affected by his studies and interests, and the more he can assimilate the better. And finally, he has the problem of procuring a livelihood: he has sometimes to choose between a dull routine which provides little or no food for his mind, or an active and interesting one which leaves him very little time and energy. For some, this livelihood can be found in various forms of journalistic or paraliterary occupation; in teaching and lecturing.[30†] For others, something as remote as possible from their literary interests is desirable: something which uses none of the kind of energy that goes into poetry, and which brings them in contact with worlds far removed from those of literary and artistic circles. One cannot generalize about how a poet should earn his living in this or in any conceivable society. But the worst thing for him, perhaps, from every point of view, would be to do nothing and care about nothing, except writing poetry.

So far, we have seen that earning a living and cultivating one's latent powers are not altogether easy to reconcile; and I have cited the special case of the poet, who wants to write poetry as well as earn a living and cultivate his latent powers. We may now ask whether the process of equipment to play one's part as a citizen may present any possible impediment to either of the other aims of education. It all depends on the content which we give to the idea of citizenship, and the means which we take to equip people for it. I think that the idea of the "good citizen" is a moral concept; if so, we should expect the good citizen to be simply the good man manifesting his goodness in the social context. But we can still, I think, speak of a man as a good citizen whom we may regard as in some respect or other not a good man. A man may be devoted to the interests of his country, his region, or his city;

he may sacrifice pleasure, comfort, popularity, in the public interest; wear out his energies in toiling for the public good; and yet be in private life vicious and dishonorable. To what extent can we call such a man a good citizen? It is strange, to me, that this elementary question, that of the relation of good citizenship to goodness, of public to private virtue, has not received the attention of writers on education such as Dr. Joad. Possibly the cultivation of virtue is regarded generally as the responsibility – the only responsibility – which educators leave to the parents. But the question of how far a bad man can be a good citizen is an interesting one in itself, and one about which Socrates, if he were alive today, would not fail to have something to say.[31] For Dr. Joad, at least, it is clear that the ethical problem is one to be passed over, and that for him education in citizenship is education in applying intelligence to public affairs.

This becomes clear when he tells us of what Education in Citizenship should consist. First, those things which seem to him obvious. A child should be taught history, constitutional history (including instruction in how he is governed and how his governors are elected, and the structure of local as well as national government); biology and physiology, so that he may be made free (that is Dr. Joad's phrase) of the main facts, including the sexual facts, relating to the working of his own body; geography, and international affairs.[32] This is a formidable program for any child; and it is entirely training of the mind. I dare say that a knowledge of the main facts relating to the working of his own body might induce a child to brush his teeth morning and evening, if he were so rational a child as Dr. Joad must have been: most of us learn the habit first, and the reason for it later. There are perhaps a good many other things that the child could learn, merely in order to be a good citizen: jujitsu, to cope with burglars and footpads;[33] first aid, in order to save the victims (for the Good Samaritan, from what little we know about him, seems to have had the makings of a good citizen). But my main comment on Dr. Joad's list of accomplishments is not that it is all simply book-learning, but that it omits any mention of training in moral behavior and feeling. One would think that the good citizen was simply the well-informed citizen; but I am not convinced that a child who, in Dr. Joad's words, "carries at the back of his mind a political map of the modern world,"[34] will be better qualified to distinguish between good government and bad. Dr. Joad not only ignores what is generally called "private" in favor of "public" morality – thus ignoring the question whether we can ultimately draw any distinction between private and public morality; even his public morality

appears to be merely a matter of being well-informed, and being trained to reason correctly.

Some of you may already have thought that I am devoting too much attention to Dr. Joad, who wrote a popular and very readable book called *About Education*. You may even have suspected that I have done this because his is the only book on the subject that I have read. You would somewhat exaggerate my illiteracy if you thought this: I have chosen Dr. Joad, partly because he puts a typical point of view so well – the point of view of the middle-brow intellectual who was reared on G. B. Shaw and H. G. Wells – for Dr. Joad is not very much younger than myself[35] – and partly because his attitude towards education is implicit in statements sometimes made by more qualified educators. In a list of the aims of education by an authority whose name carries very much more weight in these matters than Dr. Joad's, I read that "every man has a function as a man." With this I do not disagree: every safety razor has a function as a safety razor. I then read, "every man has a function as a citizen or subject of the society in which he lives."[36] With man's function as a man I shall try to cope later. Meanwhile, I may say that I do not see how his function as a citizen can be separated from his function as a man. I think the latter is the more important, but for reasons which I must postpone giving. But I return to my previous question, whether the really good citizen must not be also a good man; with the qualification that in certain contexts we are entitled to say that so-and-so is a "good citizen," without committing ourselves to the assertion that he is a "good man." When it comes to training a young person, or, as Dr. Joad says, a child, to be a good citizen, I still think that it is important first to train him to become a good man.

There are incidental questions which we may ask. Democracy is the best form of society: on that we are all agreed. The chief point on which we do not agree is, as I have said before, what is a democracy.[37] Most of us agree that democracy is of the parliamentary sort: that is, there are two parties, one in, one out, and neither party should be too long in or out. The government of our nation is, of course, rather more democratic when the party which we support is in, than when the other party is. I have been told that "the function of the citizen of a democracy is to rule in turn for the good life of the whole."[38] Certainly, both parties, whether we call them Republican and Democrat, or Conservative and Labour, rule, when in office, for the good life of the whole: though none of them, when out of office, is likely to admit that the nation is being ruled for the good life of the whole. Certainly,

in a democracy, every man should know how to rule and be ruled. To be wholly ruler, to be wholly ruled, is to lose humanity: and, in fact, the humblest worker needs to keep his own offspring in order, while the most powerful despot may be dominated, if by no constitutional powers, by wife, or mistress, or friends. The essential of a democracy is that there is no *total* rule: for total rule means that somebody is in control of affairs about some of which he is totally incompetent. In a democracy, scientists and scholars and artists should rule in their own spheres: it is not a democracy when a symphony can be deviationist, or a melancholy poem about an unhappy love affair defeatist and decadent, or a biological theory subversive.[39]

It seems to me that we may raise the question, how far good citizenship can be an aim of a curriculum of education. To a large extent, surely, it must be the product of a training which is not consciously aimed at anything so comprehensive, and at the same time so narrowly defined, as citizenship. The habits of accepting authority, of being able to exercise responsible freedom, of being able to exercise authority when compelled to assume it, are acquired unconsciously in early years. If parents are public-spirited people, whose interests are not selfishly limited to themselves and their family, children will learn from their example (for the unconscious influence of parents is much more influential than their precepts) that they have a duty towards their neighbors, involving the assumption of responsibility and the exercise of self-control. And in so far as their mental capacities permit, they will learn that this duty involves not merely habitual responses, but thinking and making deliberate choices. In a school, they will learn adaptation to a larger community; and in a college, develop their public sense further in societies and voluntary activities.

Now when it is said that "in a democracy the good man and the good citizen are identical," I do not disagree, but I should prefer to put it more generally and say simply, "the good man and the good citizen are identical." For the former proposition seems to imply another to this effect: "in a state of society which is not a democracy one cannot be both a good man and a good citizen." Now, under an evil system of government, the good man may sometimes realize his good citizenship by opposing that government. He will not, from the point of view of his rulers, be a good citizen; but then, from their point of view, he will not be a good man either. If good citizenship implies goodness, then there is something universal about good citizenship. Of course, we can say that the Christians martyred in the Roman persecutions were bad citizens; and from the point of view of their persecutors no

doubt they were. Perhaps we may say, however, that in a democracy the good man has the greatest opportunity to exercise his goodness in citizenship; and the bad man the greatest opportunity to exercise his badness – or perhaps rather that in a democracy a greater number of good men, and a greater number of bad men, have this opportunity. This gives us a kind of definition of democracy, as the kind of society which offers these opportunities; but observe also that while we arrive at our definition of democracy by the aid of the term "citizenship," we are also implying a definition of good citizenship in terms of democracy.

I am afraid that when we pass from the term "good man" to the term "good citizen" we are insensibly passing from one shade of meaning of "good" to another. But the test of the degree of difference is not found within the proposition itself, but in the further conclusions we draw: the difference may not appear until we have gone quite a long way. Similarly in the sentence "since in a democracy all men are rulers, all men must have the education that rulers must have." Now we see what this means, and we do not disagree; but I think that there are here two different shades of meaning of the word "rulers." An eminent British civil servant, a couple of years ago, gave a broadcast talk to explain UNESCO to his fellow-citizens, and said that UNESCO was "a world club." Now, one sees what he meant to convey; yet I could not help making the comment that a club was by definition an organization of which some people were not members: if everybody in the world were a member, it would cease to be a club.[40] The difficulty here is not so extreme. But even though we agree that all men are rulers, we must not overlook differences in kind and degree of rule. If we think of any particular type of ruler, we can see that some of them need an education differing from that of other men: a judge of the Supreme Court is one kind of ruler, the conductor of an orchestra is another; and they have both had very specialized training, as well as special native aptitudes, to qualify them for the exercise of rule.

The difficulty, and the source of danger, is the application of the general statement about the aims of education, with which everyone can agree, to more concrete problems. From the general statement about education for citizenship we may pass, through the narrowing of the meaning to *political* activity, and through the narrowing of the meaning of education to what can be taught in classes and from books, to the putting of courses in citizenship into our curricula. I do not say that this is altogether a bad thing, though much could be transmitted by the intelligent teaching of history. It may even

be necessary; but when it is, we should try to be quite clear as to why it is. It may be necessary as a palliative of conditions beyond the scope or control of the educational system. In so far as it is an attempt to educate the social conscience, to inculcate virtues, it is trying to supply a training which should be given by the family and the social environment, and is needed because the family and the social environment are not what they should be. In so far as it is the imparting of necessary or desirable knowledge and information, it may imply that the conduct of our society has become so complicated, the problems so interrelated, that it is beginning to make claims on the ordinary citizen greater than he can bear. For example, in earlier times foreign policy was the concern of only a very few persons in any nation; and it was only in relations with one foreign nation at a time – and with many foreign countries not at all – that the issues were so grave that it behooved every educated citizen to inform himself. Now we are all constantly concerned with what happens everywhere. The Spanish-American War was, it seemed at the time, nobody's business but that of the United States and Spain:[41] nowadays, a war anywhere, even if of apparently small dimensions, is a matter of concern to everybody everywhere. I do not wish to pursue this minor question, but only to point the issue. By "education for citizenship" we may mean training in the essential faculties which are necessary both in the conduct of one's personal affairs and in forming an opinion about public policy: the ability to reason, to weigh evidence, to decide how much one needs to know in order to make up one's mind, and the ability to perceive the fundamental moral differences of right and wrong and apply them. And, so far as these things can be taught, they can be inculcated through the study of history. But we may also mean courses of study in all the manifold social problems of contemporary life: in political theory, in public finance, in economics, in municipal government, or in the whole field now covered by sociology, several very vital questions arise.[42] At what age should these studies be begun? And how much time should be given to them at each stage? I do not believe that you can teach these things, beyond a point, to those who are not going to be individually concerned with them; because most of us cannot study very deeply any subject which does not concern us as individuals, which concerns us only as *members*. I do not mean that nobody should be deeply concerned with these matters: that would be absurd. But those who are deeply concerned with them, and justifiably concentrate their attention on them, are those who are going to make their living thereby, and what is more important, to express themselves by making

active contributions. That is, the subjects to which we can profitably give the most attention are those in which we hope to excel. The desire to vote always for the right candidate cannot become the ambition of a lifetime.

Education for citizenship, then, seems to mean first of all the developing of social conscience; and I have already suggested that "social" conscience can be only a development of "conscience": the moment we talk about "social conscience" and forget conscience, we are in moral danger – just as "social justice" must be based upon "justice." The separation in our minds which results simply from dwelling constantly upon the adjective "social" may lead to crimes as well as errors. In the name of social justice we can excuse, or justify to ourselves, or simply ignore, injustice; in the name of social conscience we can do the same by conscience. The same sort of substitutions can occur with the word "democracy." "Social democracy" sounds at first a phrase to which no one could object; but the denotation can be so manipulated that it can be made to point to something which to most of us, I think, may be anything but "democratic."

What I hope has emerged from this wild-goose chase is that our list of three aims of education – the professional, the social, and the development of all the latent powers and faculties – is one in which each aim is implicated with the others, and also that each one may be pursued in such a way as to interfere with the others. This is due to the applications we make of each of three undisputed propositions; and to the fact that in each step of the inferences we make, we may be applying narrower and questionable definitions of a word which in the original proposition did not need to be defined. I have so far said least about the incorrect inferences we may draw from "the development of the latent powers and faculties" or, if we are not merely thinking of hobbies and recreations, what Arnold called the "pursuit of perfection." I once knew a man who, being of independent means, planned a comprehensive humanistic education for himself. I am not quite sure to what studies he applied himself at an American university, but they did not include Latin and Greek, because he deferred these until he should get to Oxford or Cambridge, where he thought he would have them at their best; or modern languages and literatures, because he intended, after Oxford or Cambridge, to spend a year or two at universities in France, Germany, and Italy in turn. An extensive course of travel was to crown this culture. Needless to say he never completed the program. The pursuit of perfection, or of comprehensive culture, is not enough, because it is a by-product of our desire to *do* something. To perfect oneself, so far as one can, and in the ways in which

one is perfectible, may be a duty, but only in relation to some aim beyond oneself. To this point I shall return later. I propose to turn now to the question of the general presuppositions, assumptions, or conscious social and political theories upon which any theory of education must be based. In closing, however, I should like to quote a contemporary French writer, Gustave Thibon; from his introduction to that very profound and original book *La Pesanteur et la grâce* by Simone Weil. It is the thought of Simone Weil which he is expounding:

> The soul devoted to the pursuit of the absolutely good meets in this world with insoluble contradictions. "Our life is impossibility, absurdity. Everything that we will is contradicted by the conditions or by the consequences attached to it. That is because we are ourselves contradiction, being merely creatures. . . ." If, for example, you have innumerable children: that tends to bring about overpopulation and war (the typical case is Japan). If you improve the material conditions of the people: you risk spiritual deterioration. If you devote yourself utterly to some person – you cease to exist for that person. Only imaginary goods imply no contradiction: the girl who desires a large family, the social reformer who dreams of the happiness of the people – such individuals do not encounter any obstacle so long as they refrain from action. They sail along happily in a good which is absolute, but fictitious: to stumble against reality[43] is the signal for waking up. This contradiction, the mark of our wretchedness and our greatness, is something that we must accept in all its bitterness.[44]*

The Aims of Education

3. The Conflict between Aims[45]

We have already observed that the term "education" has become more difficult of definition as a result of social changes in the last three or four hundred years. We may distinguish four important phases. In the first, we were concerned only with the training of a small minority for certain learned professions. In the second, with the refinement of culture, we were concerned with the education of the gentleman, or of the *honnête homme*; and at the same time, with the supply of the rudiments of literacy to a humbler stratum of society. During the nineteenth century, the minds of educators were largely occupied with the problem of extending the benefits, or supposed benefits, of education as then understood, to an increasing number of the population. The problem was apparently simple: men still thought that they knew what education was – it was what a part of the community had been receiving; and so long as this education could be supplied to increasing numbers, educators felt that they were on the right road. But today we realize that we have come near enough to the end of expansion to be faced with a wholly new problem. It is parallel to the end of geographical expansion. In the nineteenth century, the United States was still pushing westward; European nations were still staking claims for themselves in colonial empire. Now the area of geographical expansion is over – at least, by the methods employed in the previous century. In the nineteenth century, there seemed also to be only the problem of educating more of the members of society. But now we are at a stage at which we are not simply trying to educate more people – we are already committed to providing everybody with something called education. We are coming to the end of our educational frontier. Long ago we decided that everybody must be taught to read, write, and cipher; and so long as there were large numbers who could not read, write, or cipher, we did not need to look too closely into the question of what education meant. Every stage of development of our society presents us not only with new, but with more difficult problems, as well as with the same problems in more difficult forms: for we have now to cope with a new illiteracy, and a much more difficult illiteracy to overcome – namely, the illiteracy of that

part of the population which has had its elementary schooling but has become illiterate through lack of occasion to use what it has been taught. This secondary illiteracy is a new phenomenon. It is aggravated by the effect of radio and cinema, and by the replacement, in popular periodicals, of words by pictures.[46] I am convinced that readers in England – readers of *anything* – can be classified partly according to the size of type to which they can give attention. One can say that the educated man is one who can read the reports of Parliamentary debates, and the reports of important law cases, from beginning to end – skipping intelligently, of course.[47] There is a larger number who can read a few paragraphs, if the type is large enough. There is an increasing proportion of the population which can read only headlines, of any part of a newspaper not concerned with sport or crime.

This is a kind of parenthesis, illustrative of the fact that even illiteracy – even analphabetism – is not a problem that can be finished with and written off. My point is that now that we are committed to giving everybody formal instruction, everything must be called into question and examined – the forms, the subject matter, the methods, the purposes. So we have always new problems, and the old ones in new forms.

What happens in our thinking about education is, of course, only a special instance of what is happening to human consciousness. In the world today we find ourselves more and more trying consciously to manipulate what had been left to take its own course – that is, our area of conscious manipulation becomes bigger and bigger. A problem comes into existence through our ability to become aware of it; the awareness shapes the problem; and once we are conscious of a problem, we cannot dismiss it from consciousness; we find ourselves under obligation to try to find an answer.

By an "educational system" – whether we are considering a particular institution, or the general organization of instruction in which we can distinguish national characteristics – we mean something which is a compound of *growth* and *construction*. I accept the view which refers to "the relativity of educational theory and practice to a prevailing order," and I agree with Professor Adolf Löwe when he says:

> . . . no system of education can be truly appreciated or criticised except against the background of the social order in which it operates. The reason for this is that education always serves a social purpose, even if both teacher and pupil are unaware of the fact and experience the educational contact as an entirely spontaneous undertaking. Actually at each stage,

> from elementary to university education, powerful social forces are at work, moulding the maturing individual according to a pattern, thus aiming at creating a definite human *type*.[48*]

I have only two comments to make on this quotation: first, that the "powerful social forces" may be *more* or *less* conscious; and may consist of the influence of a dominant class, or of a prevailing attitude towards life of the society as a whole, or they may be concentrated, in a totalitarian regime, in the deliberate aims of the leaders of a political party. Second, we must recognize that the system of education in every country is the product of history, and reflects the history, and responds to the temperament, of that people. In so far as a system of education is something shaped by the conscious aims of a few men – whether these men are organizing the education of their own people, or creating a system for some more backward race – there is always grave danger of borrowing or imposing something which does not fit the ethos, the way of life, the habits of thought and feeling of that people. In America we have seen different aims and methods promoted by educators biased by an enthusiasm for German, or French, or English systems of education, respectively – educators who were sometimes themselves partly educated in one or other of these countries. The intellectual formation of a man like President Eliot of Harvard, himself partly the product of the German system, led, I think, to an exaggerated application of German methods.[49] On the other hand, I think it is very likely that the model of English institutions in India, and of Western educational methods in the East in general, was too hurriedly and confidently imposed.[50] But the confusion of the imitation of various European systems in America, and of Western – including American – methods in the East, is now in danger of becoming more general, as every part of the world becomes more aware of every other; as the concentration of wealth and power shifts from one nation to another; and as a greater uniformity of culture seems likely to result from the pressure of one civilization upon another.

In the changes of which I have been speaking, in the continual enlargement of the area of human planning, it is apparent that we are living in an age in which *construction* has priority over *growth*. This is a development which we must accept. We have not time to wait, or to leave things to be fought out between various natural forces. We live in an age when towns have to be designed, when we have to have regulations about the type of building, the height of building, and the uses to which building may be put,

in every city area. And in such an age we also find ourselves obliged to be more conscious about what we are doing in our educational institutions. Only we must remember that being more conscious about everything is a very great strain, for it imposes a greater and greater responsibility upon fewer and fewer people. The psychological and physiological strain upon the member of a government cabinet today, the strain of being head of a government, or even secretary of state or foreign minister, is almost greater than any human being should be asked to bear.

We must be prepared then, so far ahead as we can descry anything, for a tendency to universal standardization in education everywhere. When, a couple of years ago, it was announced that an agreement had been reached for standardization of nuts and bolts between Britain and the United States, so that we should be able to buy a nut in one country and fit it to a screw in the other, the announcement appeared in very small print, but it struck me as the most important news of the day.[51] It was also a portent. And the other thing for which we must be prepared is greater and greater intervention and control of education by the State. And when I say "the State," I do not mean Illinois or any other state – I mean the central government in every country. It has been formally a fact in certain European countries; but in all countries I think that the State is likely to find itself more obliged to pay the piper, and therefore more impelled to call the tune.

There are obvious material reasons for this. Educational institutions, especially the big universities, become more and more expensive to run. They become bigger, they need always more buildings, more staff, and their maintenance involves a higher and higher proportion of administrative and financial work. They need bigger and bigger libraries and museums; more and better laboratories; and scientific equipment becomes more and more elaborate and costly. At the same time, the endowments bring diminishing returns, and the private sources from which new endowments flowed are running dry. In the end, perhaps bankruptcy might lead to the universities having to be taken over by the State or closed down. But on the other hand, the central governments become more and more interested in what the universities do. I am, I ought to say, thinking of conditions in Britain: how far these observations apply to conditions in America is for you to judge. The British government, owing to the great expansion of the Civil Service, is a very large employer of labor: the requirements of the Civil Service become more varied and specialized, and must be satisfied by recruits from all the universities. Also, every government today is more and more concerned with

the advances of science in such ways as the governments find needful. If the universities are not equipped to pursue the kind of research, and provide men trained in the specialties that the governments require, then the universities must be provided with the funds – and directed in the use of them.

Nobody dislikes totalitarian government more than I do; but it is not enough merely to hate it, or to concentrate our detestation upon its uglier manifestations elsewhere. We must at least recognize the existence of pressures which are modifying society everywhere, if only in order to be alert to counteract them and to accept nothing that we can do without. Not all men are moved by unscrupulous love of power, or by fanatical ideology: men sometimes find themselves in a position where they have to assume more power than they want – or in a position in which the assumption of power may plausibly seem to be the only way of meeting some crisis or relieving some intolerable situation. And if it comes to seem more and more important for the centralized State to control every branch of instruction, to exercise the ultimate control, then the "social purpose" of education will come to be identified with the "social purpose" of the head of the department of State responsible for education.

I have been following a rather tortuous course to lead to a question which really started me on it. In what I wrote about education several years ago, a critic finds an inconsistency. He says, "Mr. Eliot's chief complaint of other writers on education is that they seek to use the schools to achieve social purposes they have at heart. Then he falls into the pit he has digged for others: he wants to use the schools to advance social purposes of his own."[52] Now, I do not think that anybody can think seriously about education who is devoid of social purposes of his own; and I am sure that these social purposes will guide him towards some of his conclusions about education. For anyone who denies that education should have a social purpose will be omitting something without which it is not education. But I think that anyone who considers education in relation to social purpose should try to be quite clear as to what social purposes guide his own theory of education; which are peculiar to himself, or to a group whose views are not shared by some other group; which he believes to apply to the society to which he and his sympathizers belong; and which, if any, apply to every society.

What I have been saying before, therefore, was intended to elicit the fact that the meaning of the term "social purpose" is subject to a good deal of variation. In a liberal democracy it should mean something discernible in the mind and temperament of the people as a whole, something arising out

of its common ethos, which finds expression through a variety of intellectual leaders holding varied and sometimes conflicting opinions. In a totalitarian society, it may mean something formulated in the brains of a few persons in power, deduced from a particular political-social theory, and imposed by every means of compulsion and indoctrination, so that it may in time become integrated into the common ethos. This is a very different kind of social purpose. In a liberal society every writer on the subject will have some social purpose of his own; something he wishes to retain, restore, or introduce through the means of education. Therefore he should know himself how far his assumptions are his own, and how far he is justified in assuming that they are shared by all intelligent men of good will. He should, in short, examine his premises.

Now as education, it has been agreed, has several aims, the social purposes have to be guarded from interfering with the other aims; and also, we have to allow for the possibility that we may have several social purposes which have to be reconciled with each other. I remind you of the sage words of Gustave Thibon and Simone Weil which I quoted at the end of my last address.[53] I shall take as an illustration "the ideal of equality of opportunity," because my previous reservations on the applicability of that ideal seem to have provoked especially strong dissent. This ideal certainly expresses a social purpose, and is equally applicable to other things than education: education is merely one of the benefits to which men and women should ideally have equal opportunity. This ideal has two very strong grounds of appeal, which must be distinguished. One is that ability is wasted, of which society has need, through our failing to recognize and train it. This is a utilitarian argument; it has force, but of a very different kind from the second. This is, that it is not just that any person should be prevented, by our failure to educate him, from the full development of his latent powers and faculties. The second seems to me the more universal and compelling, because it is a *moral* ground. Now on this ground at least, the assertion that every child should have equal opportunity for education is one which nobody will deny. The only difficulty comes when we proceed, from cherishing this ideal, to attempt to realize it; and when we give it priority, in our educational schemes, over other ideals of education.

If we pursued the ideal of equality of opportunity rigorously we should, it seems to me, have to see to it that no educational institution was superior to any other professing to supply the same grade of education. We should certainly have to see to it that no institution gave a better education simply

because it could charge higher fees, and select its pupils for any other reason than intellectual promise. To what extent do the pupils at expensive private schools get a better education? What is it that their parents are paying for? I know that the motives from which most affluent parents choose a school are often motives which have nothing to do with education. There is the desire that their children should mix with other children of the same economic status and social type; there is also the calculation that their children will make the sort of friends who will be "useful" to them in later life; there is also the simple snobbism attached to the name of a particular school or university. But there are better reasons than these: there is the attraction of a foundation with traditions, and a long list of distinguished alumni. And there is the best reason of all, especially for the private school – for it is in school days that this reason is the most cogent: the parents know that their child will be a member of a small group, that he will be taught in a class of fifteen or twenty instead of in a class of forty or fifty. Anyone who has ever tried to teach young children knows that the larger your class is, beyond fifteen or twenty, the less you can teach.

It is certainly desirable that every school in the country should have enough accommodation, and enough teachers, to be able to teach children in smaller groups. I thought, in 1944, that the British Education Act of that year – an attempt, certainly, to improve state education – put the wrong things first. Instead of extending immediately the years of compulsory education, and thus adding to the number of pupils, we should in my opinion have aimed first at the supply of more teachers and accommodation for those already in the state-supported or -aided schools; and undertaken to give better teaching than we do, to those under fourteen.[54] But when will we, in any country, provide the money for this reform? Again, before we train more teachers, we ought to consider whether we are paying our present teachers adequately. I have never worked in a coal mine, or a uranium mine, or in a herring trawler; but I know from experience that working in a bank from 9:15 to 5:30, and once in four weeks the whole of Saturday, with two weeks' holiday a year, was a rest cure compared to teaching in a school.

I am told that "[N]o American advocate of equality of opportunity would argue that the rich should be forbidden to set up schools of their own, which might turn out to be superior to those supported by the State."[55] This is advocacy of a limited equality, an equality qualified by a good deal of inequality. If the schools established by the rich for the rich turn out to be better schools (though I do not believe this is altogether true) then what becomes of

equality of opportunity? And how can we limit our equality to an equal opportunity to get a good education? If one child has better opportunities in life than another, merely because his parents are richer, will not many people regard this situation as unjust? It would seem that inequality in education is merely a special instance of inequality in general, and if we affirm a principle in one area are we not driven to accept it in all? Certainly, some English advocates of equality in education would go much further than, as I am told, American advocates do: they would abolish the private school and the privately endowed institution, or bring them all into the state system.

The usefulness of the phrase "equality of opportunity" is confused by the various meanings which we attach to the word "opportunity" – it means different things to different people, and different things to the same people at different moments, often without our knowing it. That everyone should, as far as we can make it possible, be able to pursue the activity for which he is best fitted, is an aim which we can all applaud. One has sometimes observed the son of people in well-to-do circumstances, admirably qualified by talent and temperament to be a first-rate garage mechanic, yet never having the opportunity to become one. Pressure of family and environment, the acquirement of tastes incompatible with the occupation for which he is best fitted, and perhaps also a defective education, usually stand in his way. I am afraid that to most people at most times "opportunity" means a good many other things than the opportunity to develop the latent powers and capacities: it means opportunity to make money, to acquire a higher social status, to have power over others. For some young women, opportunity means opportunity to get a screen test; and only a small number of those who crave this opportunity deserve it. In short, opportunity is an empty term unless we can answer the question "opportunity for what?"

It would seem, then, that most of the time, when we talk of "equality of opportunity," we either do not know what we mean, or do not mean what we say, or else are driven to conclusions from which most people would shrink. It is avoiding the issue if we assume vaguely that "inequality" means only the injustice of overprivileged and underprivileged social classes. It may happen that a child at a public school finds a teacher who will elicit his aptitude for a particular subject, and that a child at an expensive private school has just the wrong teacher. But what about overprivileged and underprivileged areas in the same country? A poor state or country may not be able to provide such good equipment or teachers, such good libraries or laboratories,

as a richer one. Should not that inequality be redressed also? Thus the claim of equality of opportunity, if pressed to its logical conclusion, seems to me to lead inescapably to a universal and exclusive state system of education, to the cost of which the richer parts of the country, like the richer individuals, will contribute proportionately, but from which they will derive only the same educational returns as their poorer neighbors. And next, is it just that the citizens of a wealthy or advanced nation should have greater opportunity for education than those of a backward one? Unless we maintain that some races or peoples are superior to others we seem to be forced toward the goal of a world system of education. And finally, if we are to have complete equality of opportunity in education, it seems to follow that we must have a uniform system for grading the intelligence of pupils, so that each shall receive just the kind and amount of education to which his gifts entitle him.

If, as I have suggested, the thoroughgoing application of the principle of equal opportunity (reinforced by the other pressures of which I have spoken) tends towards increased control by the State, then the State will have something to say about opportunity. It will find itself limiting opportunity to those vocations which serve the ends of the State as conceived by those who happen to control the State. I am not suggesting that it would, in a Western democracy, reach the point of direction of labor; but by offering greater inducements and advantages and facilities in one direction rather than another, it might tend to limit education to the kinds of training which served the immediate purposes of the State.

The idea of equal opportunity, it would seem, has to be considered in relation to each of the three aims of education from which we started; and it might be that in this connection, also, one aim would be pursued in such a way as to interfere with another. The difficulty arises from the fact that we cannot, in practice, wholly separate one from another. There have been, no doubt, men who were animated by curiosity and the thirst for knowledge, to such a degree as to be able to pursue their studies quite apart from their actual calling in life. There have been Spinozas who, in order to be free to exercise a wholly unremunerative activity and one not regarded by the world as particularly useful, have been content to earn a modest livelihood by grinding lenses.[56] There have been other men, in humble positions, in whom the speculative or contemplative motive has been so strong that they found happiness in this double life. On the other hand, there have been men so completely limited in interest to the duties of their occupation that they

have seemed to be hardly more than machines. Most men escape from this only by way of recreations and hobbies, ordinarily of a rather trivial nature. The ideal is a life in which one's livelihood, one's function as a citizen, and one's self-development all fit into and enhance each other. For most of us, the full pursuit of any of these aims must interfere with another; and we are obliged, at best, to make almost day-to-day calculations and decisions between the several claims. We are all limited, by circumstances if not by capacities. To get anything you want you find you have to sacrifice something else that you want; and in getting it, you find that you have to accept other things that you do not want. Yet we must maintain that a man is not educated if he is merely trained to a trade or profession; that he has to play his part as a citizen; and that, as a citizen, to be something more than a voting machine, and, as a worker, to be something more than a working machine, he must be trained and developed to something more than citizenship and work. And we find that the principle of "equal opportunity" is meaningless – that is, susceptible of being interpreted by everybody in terms of what he *desires*, instead of what he ought to desire – unless we answer the question "opportunity for what?"

There are obviously some "opportunities" which ought to be available to everyone. Every man should have the opportunity of earning a livelihood in reasonable and decent conditions; of marrying and rearing a family who will also have the same opportunity; of rest and recreation, and so forth. You will observe that this sentence is made up of terms which will have different meanings in different social contexts: it is necessarily vague. But when we proceed beyond material necessities we get into a region of values. And so the assertion of "equal opportunity" leads us gradually to the point at which we must know what we mean by "the good life." The question "What is education?" or the question "What is the aim of education?" leads us to this point. Now it is unlikely that we shall all agree on an answer to the final question, "What is Man?" Therefore, what we mean in practice by "education" will be the highest common factor of what enough educated people mean by it. So you may say that "education" is likely to mean, in practice, a compromise between what different people mean by it.

I hope that it is by now clear that I do not complain of other writers that "they seek to use the schools to achieve social purposes they have at heart." When we talk about education, we cannot stop at education as if it were a field which we could close off; an area in which we could come to agreement

whatever our differences of philosophy. We must have a social purpose in education, and therefore, if we talk about education, we must be prepared to make clear to ourselves and to our hearers what our social purpose is. But the social purpose itself should not spring from a prejudice, an emotional bias in favor of equality or hierarchy, a bias in favor of freedom or of order. Nor is the social purpose in itself enough, for it does not take account of the whole nature of man.

We have seen that, just as we are led, the moment we begin to think seriously about education, to think about citizenship, so thinking about citizenship leads us to something beyond citizenship; for the good citizen in the end turns out to be the good man; and that leads wherever the whole problem of ethics is going to take us. Now a view of education such as Dr. Joad's, which suggests that training for citizenship and training for the development of one's latent powers and faculties can be carried on in separate departments, may seem clear enough about the discipline for citizenship, but offers no general prescription for the development, or we may say "the improvement" of man as man. As citizens, men must hold certain principles in common, and must agree on certain social habits; the fact of having to get on with other people imposes some discipline. But in the question of the development of latent powers, this view does not proceed to maintain that there are certain latent powers for good, and certain latent powers for evil, in man as man; it suggests rather, that each man has latent powers and faculties peculiar to himself, illustrated by the various ways in which men spend their leisure time. It is perfectly true that some men have an aptitude for and take enjoyment in doing their own repairs about the house; whereas others are much better advised to send for a plumber, a carpenter, or an electrician. I have no doubt that when Dr. Joad talks of latent powers and faculties, he is thinking of higher powers and faculties than those of the handy man.[57] Nevertheless, he is leaving the area of latent powers and faculties uncontrolled. The danger of separation between the social and the private life – which has the corollary that the only criterion of morals is whether one's conduct is harmful to one's neighbors, and that every man should be free to do as he likes with *himself* – is that the social code, the code of citizenship, will become more and more constrictive, more and more exercising a pressure towards *conformity*; and that this public servitude to society will be compensated by extreme license in whatever conduct is supposed to be none of society's business.

It is true that in a society organized on this principle the social may prove in the end to encroach more and more upon the private. In a society organized to carry out this principle, the rules of matrimony and sexual relations may be, at first, much relaxed. But then it may be found that this relaxation has undesirable social consequences – that it affects the birth rate unfavorably, in a nation which finds that it needs more workmen and soldiers; or that it has an unfortunate effect upon the children, who may begin to show psychological aberrations, or may grow up to be less desirable citizens than the government wants them to be: and then private life will be interfered with in the name of society. People may be ordered to have larger families, or to have no families at all, according to whether they are judged to be suitable breeders of future citizens. Thus the individual may find his privacy, his opportunity for exercising his moral freedom and responsibility gradually taken away from him in the name of society.

The restoration of a kind of order in people's private lives, however, when it is made in the name of a social purpose only, furthers the reduction of men to machines, and is the opposite from the development of their humanity. The assumption that you can have areas of control, and areas of complete freedom, must lead either to a suffocating uniformity of order, or to chaos. The actual degree of freedom or control may differ between one area and another. We are all more willing to submit to regulation of our public than of our private behavior, and gradually, with the increasing complexity of modern civilization, we are prepared to submit to more and more regulations in the public interest. There are still people who object to being vaccinated, but few people now resent being isolated when they have typhoid fever. Most people recognize that the state of their drains is a matter in which they have a duty to their neighbors; though not everybody recognizes that he has the same duty in respect to the noise of his radio set. In an apartment house, one expects to have less freedom in many petty details of life than in a solitary cottage in the country. On the other hand, people in England since the war have objected, and they have my sympathy, to being forbidden to set up a tool shed in a country garden without a license from the government, or to being forced to employ a workman to do what they are capable of doing themselves. Fortunately, we do not yet submit to universal regulation in the public interest; and fortunately, we are still capable of being shocked by private behavior, even when it does not appear to injure anyone but the culprit himself. And so long as we are capable of resenting control, and of being shocked by other people's private lives, we are still

human. We are, at least, recognizing that man is something more than merely a social animal: that there should be limitations to social control. And by being shocked (when it is something more than a prejudice that is shocked) we are recognizing, however dimly, that there is some law of behavior which is something more than a duty to the State.

What, then, should we mean by the development of the individual's latent powers and faculties, if we go further than Dr. Joad, and consider the individual, not as if he were a seed out of a packet with no name on it, which we plant and tend out of curiosity to see what it will become, and what sort of flower or fruit it will bear; but as a seed of a known plant which has been cultivated for many generations – a plant about which we know what its flower or fruit ought to be, if it receives the right nurture and grows to perfection? How are we to try to educate good men, seeing that the idea of the good citizen implies the good man? Are we to be content with a rough-and-ready description of the good citizen, leaving everybody to define goodness according to his own taste and fancy? As you may have feared, this question raises for me the final question, that of the relation of education to religion.

The Aims of Education

4. The Issue of Religion[58]

We have, so far, arrived (I hope) at the conclusion that there is a reciprocal implication between education for citizenship, or as a social being, and the development of the latent powers of the individual, or the improvement of "man as man." A man cannot be altogether a good citizen unless he is also a good man; and the wholly good man must also be a good citizen – at least in the sense that he is one who cares for the good of his neighbors. The distinction, and the relationship, are similar to that between work and play. There is something wrong when a man gets no enjoyment from his work; and to play any game properly you have to work at it.

Even, however, if we recognize the mutual implication of citizenship and individual development, we still lack a standard by which to measure one or the other. We therefore incline to take either as the standard for the other in different contexts. In one context, citizenship is undefined; we take for granted that whatever it means, we all understand it; and our notion of individual development will be adapted to the undefined citizenship. In another context, we may do exactly the reverse. The limitation to one point of view will tend to make us either authoritarians, placing strict limitations upon the exercise of individual choice or caprice; the limitation to the other point of view will make us libertarians, holding, as some people have, that the best government is that which governs the least. The latter will tend to believe that human beings are naturally good, and that left to themselves they will flower into good citizens; the former that you can make them good by enforcing good laws – or else, that the residue of a human being's behavior, beyond what can be controlled by legislation, does not matter. And in this contest it is likely to be the authoritarians who will win, because authority is a short cut to dealing with abuses and injustices; and the contexts in which we are members of a mass are more compulsive than those in which we are individuals. In the latter, we stand alone; and it is easier to submit to an authority with which we identify ourselves than to tolerate nonconformity in others.

Although we may at this point agree that citizenship and individual development imply each other, we lack an outside standard by which citizenship

and individual development can both be measured; for the measurement by each other leaves us in a vicious circle of illusory definition, defining each in turn in terms of the other. We have found that "the improvement of man as man" is an empty phrase, unless we can agree about what is improvement; and that we cannot agree about this unless we find a common answer to the question "What is Man?" Now we cannot expect to agree to one answer to this question; for with this question, our differences will turn out in the end to be religious differences; and it does not matter whether you are a "religious person" or not, or whether you expressly repudiate everything that you call "a religion"; there will be some sort of religious attitude – even if you call it a nonreligious attitude – implied in your answer.

There are two questions which have to be distinguished: that of the place of religion in education, and that of the place of education in religion. The first is the question with which we are more familiar. To the question of the place of religion in education, there are several answers. The most important seem to be the following:

1. Where the State itself professes allegiance to a particular religion, or religious denomination, this religion may be affirmed, and taught, in all the educational institutions controlled by the State; and the teaching will be in conformity with the doctrines of this religion. Private institutions, for those who profess another religion or branch of the same religion, and for those who object to all religious teaching, may under such a system be either tolerated or suppressed: but as the suppression of every form of religious teaching except that of the official religion of the State seems to me unchristian, I am not concerned with this extreme. (All educational foundations might be religious, and none specially favored by the State. As this would be an accidental situation, implying that the State itself should take no responsibility for education, it is a purely hypothetical situation which need not concern us.)

2. The complete separation of religious instruction from instruction in other subjects. This means that in schools and colleges no religious beliefs would be taken for granted or inculcated. Religious instruction would be reserved for the home, the Sunday school, and of course the theological training college.

3. The imparting in schools of such religious instruction as represents the common belief of the greatest part of the local society, leaving the doctrines of any particular denomination to be taught by the parents

and their church. This is more or less the intention of the British Education Act of 1944: it is, of course, qualified by concessions to those parents who wish their children excused from this religious instruction, either on the ground of wanting more specific doctrine or that of another religion, or of objecting to religious teaching of any kind.[59]

4. A mixed system, in which no religion is taught in the State schools, but in which the adherents of any religion may set up denominational schools for their own children.

These are, I believe, the chief ways of dealing with the problem of religion in education. They are all, unfortunately, unsatisfactory.

We may group together the first and the second of these systems as being based on a principle, and the third and fourth as based on expediency. In drawing this distinction I am not making any value judgment: an inconsistent method may work better than a consistent one. I am merely saying that the expedient systems are not logically defensible. If the denominational school embodies the correct theory of the relation of religion to education, then it is deplorable that the greater part of the population should be deprived of its advantages; if the secular school embodies the correct theory, then it is questionable whether the denominational school should not be, to put it mildly, discouraged. (Of course, in practice, they are not so different as all that: education in secular schools does not necessarily quench religious faith in its products, and the pupils who have been educated in denominational schools frequently disencumber themselves of such religious education as they have received, very soon after they go out into the world.) Not only cannot both systems be right; the denominations cannot all be right either. Nor can the supporter of the schools of his church be altogether satisfied with his privileges. For he must be aware that his schools are tolerated by outsiders because they represent too small a minority to be worth suppressing, or because they represent too powerful a minority to suppress. He must be aware also that the costs of equipping a modern university are so great that his own church cannot supply itself with enough to go round, and that great numbers of young people will proceed from their church schools into a very different atmosphere: in England, certainly, there is no great university in which the religious foundation is now anything but vestigial.

The introduction into state-provided schools of such religious instruction as can be agreed upon as representing the common beliefs of the largest

Christian sects is an experiment of the British Education Act of 1944. This is a compromise between teaching the tenets of one particular denomination, and leaving religious education altogether to parents and Sunday schools. What its effect may be remains to be seen. Behind it, however, there is a remarkable theory of which its promoters were no doubt unaware. It is implicitly an assertion that "Christianity" is simply what all Christians believe in common, and that this is what is essential; that the differences are unimportant; and that it is possible to be a satisfactory Christian without belonging to any church. In this way the State may be initiating a theological doctrine of its own, in contradiction to all the churches. Children are to be taught in schools all that is necessary to be a Christian; leaving to the parents the option of teaching them what is necessary to be Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist or Baptist – just as they may have private lessons in piano or violin. That is the theory. The *tendency* would be, if it went to the whole length of that unlikely course, for the several churches to be supplanted by a new State Christianity. For the implication of teaching only a part of Christianity is that that is the only part which matters.

So much for the third and fourth methods. I have said that the first and second are defensible in principle. The first, that in which all State schools will teach the tenets of a particular religion and communion, is possible only under one of two conditions. Either the nation must be homogeneous in religion, so that the official religion of the State is that of the vast majority of individual citizens, or else a dictatorial government must impose its own doctrines on the mass of society – or at least impose a conformity of outward profession – by discipline, inoculation, or fraud. For such despotism there is nothing to be said. The former is possible only in a few countries, and even in these it presents dangers so grave that it may become as unsatisfactory as any other. It may lead to the control of the Church by the State, or to the control of the State by the Church: two situations between which there may not be much to choose. But it has one striking advantage in theory at least. From my point of view, it does not matter in this particular context whether the Church established in education is a national Church with a national head, or an international Church with an international head. If a National Church, then it should have a hierarchy independent of the State, and prepared if necessary to oppose the State; but where the hierarchy is itself composed of clerics appointed by the State, we have to rely on the State not to appoint men who will be subservient to it. In either case,

an authoritative and independent church is desirable for meeting the difficulty which I raised earlier in connection with the third of our "aims of education." I said that the second aim, "training for citizenship," was directed by the meaning of citizenship represented by an outside authority, in relation to which the individual has defined rights, responsibilities, and duties of submission; and that the third aim, "develop latent powers," or "improve man as man," was left to every individual, or at least to every educator, to interpret as he pleases. It is the province of our religious teachers to instruct us in our latent powers and tell us which are good and which are bad, and to give a definite meaning to the improvement of "man as man." We need a Church capable of conflict with the State as well as of co-operation with it. We need a Church to protect us from the State, and to define the limits of our rights, responsibilities, and duties of submission in relation to our rights, and to our responsibilities and duties to ourselves and towards God. And, owing to human fallibility, we may sometimes need the State to protect us against the Church. Too close identification of the two can lead to oppression from which there is no escape.

The system in which instruction in schools and colleges is purely secular, leaving religious instruction to parents and voluntary Sunday schools, appears at first to be the antithesis of that which I have just been discussing. It achieves consistency by attempting to leave out the third aim of education, or at least by limiting the meaning of "latent powers" to "capacities for everything except spiritual life," and the meaning of "the improvement of man as man" to "the improvement of man as the highest of the apes, or as *homo faber et ludens*"[60] – but not as a son of God. But the assertion that a man's religion is his private affair, that from the point of view of society it is irrelevant, may turn out in the end to lead to a situation very favorable to the establishment of a religion, or a substitute for religion, by the State. The religious sense, and the sense of community, cannot be finally divorced from each other. They are first formed, certainly, in the family; and when they are defective in the family, the defect cannot be supplied by the school and the university. But on the other hand, the contrast between a community life in which religion has no place, and a family life for which it is reserved, cannot be long endured; and the weakening of the social side of religion in the outside world will tend to weaken it in the family also; and the weakening of the religious bond between members of the same household, beginning at that early age at which we first think that we are thinking for ourselves, will leave the family reduced to the insecure bond

of affection and sentiment. Thus, when religion comes to be more and more an individual matter, and is no longer a family tie; when it becomes a matter of voluntary association on one day a week when the weather is neither too good nor too bad, and of a traditional and more and more meaningless verbiage in the pulpit and at times on the political platform; when it ceases to inform the whole of life; then a vacuum is discovered, and the belief in religion will be gradually supplied by a belief in the State. That part of the social life which is independent of the State will be diminished to the more trivial. The necessity will appear for a common belief in *something* to fill the place of religion in the community; and the liberals will find themselves surrendering more and more of the individual freedom which was the basis of their doctrine.

Let me return for a moment to the terms in which I put the first of my alternatives; that is,

> where the State itself professes allegiance to a particular religion or religious denomination, this religion may be assumed, and taught, in all the educational institutions controlled by the State; and the teaching will be in conformity with the doctrines of this religion.

Now there are obvious practical difficulties here, the first of which is that such a system is patently out of the question in any actual English-speaking country. We have a bias in favor of freedom: and we are not racially or religiously sufficiently homogeneous. But where such homogeneity is found, there are incidental dangers to the spiritual life of a people upon which I shall not dilate. The more general dangers are three: that the State shall control the Church, or fashion its own Church; that the Church shall control the State; or that the citizen shall think of himself as owing allegiance, on the same plane, to two States. For the term "religion" is just as slippery as "education," or "democracy," or a host of other terms: we tend to mean one thing in one context and another in another, and to think that because we use the same word we are indicating the same thing. When we talk of Church and State we are contrasting two institutions, and the Church is something more, and something different from a secular institution. We are ignoring the religious aspect of the Church; and religion, just because it comprehends everything, cannot be compared with anything.

There is another complication which I must introduce at this point. You may remember that I started by criticizing the three aims of education which I took over, as a point of departure, from Dr. C. E. M. Joad. I suggested that

whereas "education for citizenship" might come to mean something too precise and restricted to the standards of the moment, education for "the development of latent powers" was dangerously vague; and that it was for another authority than the State to instruct us in the cultivation and discipline of moral, intellectual, and spiritual powers with which the State was not concerned. An excessive interference and control by the State, in the answer to the question "What is a good citizen?," and a State regulation of the discipline calculated to produce good citizens, would produce only *conformity*. An excessive interference and control by a Church, in the answer to the question "What is a good man?," might also produce mere conformity. For there are many aspects of the good life, both for the individual and for society, with which the Church is not directly concerned. The direct question to which the church of any religion must provide an answer is "What is necessary for salvation?" Several churches, at various times and places, have been so sure that nothing was necessary *but* salvation, that a good deal of harm has come of it: for instance, the destruction of the Library of Alexandria by the Moslem invaders, the spoliation of shrines and casting down of images in the Protestant Reformation, and the use of torture and appalling forms of death as a deterrent to heresy.[61] On the other hand, in past ages the churches of all countries have been the centers for the arts; the religions of Europe and Asia have provided the motive for the greatest works of art of these continents; and the civilizations of Europe and Asia would be inconceivable without their religious basis. Yet civilization, and the development of higher forms of culture, can only be considered, from the religious point of view, as by-products. The fact that we do not get them except through belief in a religion does not imply that any church, or any minister of religion, is necessarily competent to pronounce in all questions of art – as inspection of some modern religious edifices will attest.

It should by now be apparent why I suggested beforehand, in turning to the question of the place of religion in education, that all of the possibilities I listed were unsatisfactory. It is at least clear that in a society in which the population is not of only one religion, or, within one religion, is divided into sects – and this is the kind of society for which we have to legislate in English-speaking countries – one or another compromise must be practiced, and each society or community must find out for itself which kind of compromise is least unsatisfactory for its own region. So that in such countries any theory of education which the framer designs to be

realizable must stop short at the point beyond which religious differences cannot be ignored. Unless we can get complete agreement about religious truth – that is, the ultimate truth about Man – we must not expect to be able to agree upon an ideal system of education which can be put into practice. Many situations in life have to be dealt with by compromise, and we must not repine over this misfortune of the human condition. But I think that it is very important, when we are forced by circumstances to stop short of the proper terminus of our speculations, to be aware of what we are doing; in respect to the present subject matter, not to pretend that a theory of education can be complete which excludes the ultimate religious problems – and I have said that "What is Man?" is one of these – and which attempts to delimit for the theory of education an area within which religion can be ignored.

I am now, I hope, in a position to remark that the inquiry into "the place of religious teaching in education" with which I have been occupying myself for some minutes is really unimportant for the purposes which I set myself in these discourses. Only, it is a problem which had to be inquired into first, before we can see how and why it is unimportant in this context. In my "aims of education" it is not the place of religion in education, but the place of education in religion, that is the vital issue. I began with stating three aims of education on which I hoped that we should all agree, and then attempted to show first that each of these aims was involved in the others, and that each both extended and qualified the meaning of the others. I tried to show, after this, that the pursuit of the meaning of these three aims leads us beyond the frontiers of the area which we should like to fence off as that of education, and forces us into the difficult territory of social and political philosophy, ethics, and finally metaphysics and theology. So that until we all come to agree in our theology, our agreement on educational questions can be only an agreement on what is possible and desirable for a particular society under the peculiar conditions of its place, time, and composition. And in our theoretical discussion of education we should try to make clear to ourselves and to others what philosophy is behind our opinions.

I do not want to leave you with the impression that I think we should postpone our discussions of education, or our attempts to improve present systems and correct their faults, until we have come to an agreement on ultimate problems. Nor do I presume that if we all came to hold the same philosophical and religious views we should suddenly all find ourselves in agreement as to how to run our schools and universities. We should simply

have got to a point at which the possibilities of confusion and misunderstanding and conflict would be minimized. There would remain many questions to which philosophy and theology could give no direct answer, or to which they would give a variety of possible answers; and there would still be a vast field for that disagreement, argument, and experiment which are necessary for activity and improvement.

Let me now, as I draw to a close, try to sum up the several conclusions to which I have come on the way. First, that "good citizenship" cannot be wholly limited to the definition of it provided by a government, or the doctrines of any particular political philosophy. Second, that the question "What is the development of latent powers of the individual?" or the question "How is man as man to be improved?" cannot be answered without reference to theology, although much is included in "improvement" which is not immediately in the province of theology. So, while we have found that we must consult our political philosophers for the elucidation they can give of our second aim of education, and that we must consult our theologians for help in elucidating the third, and our theologians who are also political philosophers for whatever they have to say on both questions together, we find that none of them covers the whole area to which each aim applies, and we are forced to reopen the question.

We have found that the two aims imply each other, just as both are implied in the first. We can say that we agree that every human being should, ideally, be educated to do the best of which he is capable by his neighbors and himself. He should, furthermore, be educated to be able to decide between conflicting claims: for we are, in practice, often faced with the necessity for sacrificing self-interest – not selfishness, but a high self-interest – to social claims, or of sacrificing social obligations to the needs of our own essential self. There are the claims represented by the State, and the claims represented by the Church; but there are, furthermore, the claims represented by our own being. If I feel ready to write a poem, and I therefore decline to address a meeting on behalf of some good cause, or prepare a paper for an important week-end conference, what is the outcome? If the poem turns out a good one, I feel justified; if it is a failure, I feel guilty. The success is always uncertain; and as for the failure, I am thinking of instances in which one could have been certain, in sacrificing the writing of the poem, of being engaged otherwise in doing something at least moderately useful. And if it is difficult to decide for ourselves, it is often impossible to judge for others. Was Thoreau a good citizen when he retired to Walden?[62] Many a man has

pursued a course which seemed folly to his family, or which appeared anti-social, or which meant pain and sacrifice for others, and we denounce him or praise him afterwards according to results which could never have been predicted. So I think we must allow a place after all to individual choice in "the development of latent powers," although with all the qualifications with which we have now loaded the phrase.

There is, however, another lane up which I must chase a hare before coming to my conclusion. So far, our aims have been for the individual: to train him to become the best that he is capable of becoming. We have been concerned only with the present, not with the past or the future. Now I suggest that one aim of education should be concerned with another obligation besides that towards the persons to be taught. If we consider only the latter, our curriculum may vary with every wind of doctrine; our notions of what is a good way of earning a living, of what is good citizenship, and of what is good individual development, may be at the mercy of the prevailing mood of one generation, or the caprice of individual educators. It should be an aim of education to maintain the continuity of our culture – and neither continuity, nor a respect for the past, implies standing still. More than ever, we should look to education today to preserve us from the error of pure contemporaneity. We look to institutions of education to maintain a knowledge and understanding of the past. And the past has to be reinterpreted for each generation, for each generation brings its own prejudices and fresh misunderstandings. All this may be comprehended in the term history; but history includes the study of the great dead languages and of the past of modern languages, including our own. Particularly, indeed, our own; for we need to understand the way in which our words have been used in the past, how they have developed and altered their meanings, in order to understand how we are using them ourselves.[63] And to preserve the wisdom of the past, we need to value it for its own sake, not simply to defend it on the ground of its usefulness. To support religion on the ground of its usefulness is obvious error; for the question, of what use is man to God, is more important than the question, of what use is God to man; and there is an analogy – though I admit the danger of drawing such an analogy with temporal affairs – in our relation to our culture. For if we estimate the wisdom and experience and art of the past only in terms of its usefulness to us, we are in danger of limiting the meaning of "usefulness," and of limiting the meaning of "us" to those who are now alive. What I wish to maintain is a point of view from which it appears more important – if we have to choose, and perhaps

we do have to choose – that a small number of people should be educated well, and others left with only a rudimentary education, than that everybody should receive a share of an inferior quality of education, whereby we delude ourselves into thinking that whatever there can be the most of, must be the best. And what I plead for is what Matthew Arnold spoke of as "the knowledge of the best that has been thought and said in the world"[64] (and, I might add, the best that has been done in the world, and that has been created in the arts in the world); that this knowledge of history, in the widest sense, should not be reserved to a small body of experts – reserved to them and parceled out among them – but that it should be the common possession of those who have passed through the higher grades of nonspecialized education; that it might well form, for most of them, the foundation for many of the more modern studies which now tend to be substituted for it.

We may now, having taken account of the aims of education and pursued the definition as far as we could, proceed to inquire what is the use of the sort of conclusion we arrive at. We find that we have given no definition of education, that in fact education does not appear to be definable. The most that we can do is to list a number of the things that education might be expected to do, and try to show that each of these, if it is to be called education, must imply the rest. They are several of the purposes which education has been made to serve; we have been able to arrive at definitions, of a sort, of some of these purposes; and although we cannot define education *simpliciter*,[65] our awareness of the mutual implication of its several purposes gives us a feeling of an identity of the word which is similar to the feeling I have professed to have of identity among the several uses of the word *runcible*. We must continue, however, to speak of "education" when we mean one of several possible uses of the word; and this felt identity is what makes it impossible for us to substitute, for the sake of clarity, several different words.

The final question is, "What is the use of such inquiries: that is, Does it make any difference to education in practice whether we speculate about the meaning of the word or not?" Men have been training their children ever since they were men, and indeed before it: I do not know at what precise point in the scale of living creatures the training of the young may be said to begin. The content of education and its form have varied according to the organization of the society in and for which the young have been trained; a long tradition and many educational institutions preceded the time at which the question "What is education?" needed to be asked. Or rather, we ask the question about the purpose of an activity at

some time after we have begun to practice it; and we have found that the question has to be asked again and again, because the activity itself alters from generation to generation. But the machinery of education, which has now become vast and complicated almost the world over, has to be kept going all the time. Many changes and developments are due to accidents, to response to local and immediate circumstances; some are due to the deliberate purpose of individual educators – right or wrong; some to the influence of a book, such as Rousseau's *Émile* (and Rousseau was a literary dabbler like myself); some to political theory or theological doctrine; some to wisdom, some to folly, and some to circumstances beyond our control.[66] But when we set out to define education, what are we trying to do? We are not trying to compose a lexical definition – that is, the customary use of a word. We are attempting to isolate the common element in a great number of kinds of training, pursued for different ends, in very different civilizations. We are attempting, that is, to devise a master key for a number of different locks. But we are also attempting to find a stipulative definition: we are not merely trying to say what the word education means – that is, has meant to those people whom we consider qualified to use it – but what true education should be. We are aiming at a real rather than a nominal definition, and are in effect trying to persuade people to accept a definition of our own. But our motive for attempting a definition may spring from our objection to the practice of education which we have endured or observed, or to the theories of other people of what education is. Since I have insisted on the fact that behind every theory of education we find, implicit or explicit, philosophical and theological, as well as sociological premises, it might be thought the question is one only for philosophers, and not for those engaged in teaching and the administration of educational institutions. But the latter have a fund of experience, and, if they are wise men, a store of wisdom, about education, which only those who have actually made teaching their vocation can have. It seems to me that it is the task of educators to think and to write about education, but to clarify for themselves the social, philosophical, and theological presuppositions which underlie their generalizations; and it is for the pure theoretician, the philosopher or theologian, to refer his theories to the educator – the man who has had experience of the difficulties of teaching anybody anything. It is, incidentally, for the legislator, when he is moved by aught but political expediency, to consult both, as well as to do a little thinking for himself.

It is obvious that no lexical definition of education can answer the question "What is education?," since all that a dictionary can do is to tell us the principal ways in which the word has been used in the past, and up to the date at which the lexicographer compiled his account of the word, by those writers whose authority he respects. While we are aware of a relation among these several definitions of the uses of the word, we seem unable to get any one primary definition, which all these secondary definitions will imply. The definition we are seeking is one which involves judgments of value; it will therefore be one upon which we cannot all agree, so cannot possibly be a definition in the dictionary sense. (Incidentally, people have been very far from agreeing upon a definition of the word "definition.")[67] As for the list of aims, whether it be of three or more, and whether we introduce subdivisions or not, there are several qualifications to be made. It is always possible that one or more of the purposes listed by a writer may be wrong, or wholly unacceptable to others; it is possible that what is in fact the same purpose may be expressed by different writers in quite different terms; and it is always possible that the list ought to be longer. We all try, of course, to reduce it to as few as possible: that is one of the rules of the game. But just as the meaning of the word education has developed in the past, and may be expected to develop and change further in the future, so it is possible that in some future and unpredictable situation the purposes of education will have to be formulated anew, and also that new purposes may appear which cannot be reduced to terms of those already recognized.

It may be observed, also, that the more clear and distinct we make our ideas on the subject, the less is the likelihood of agreement on what these aims or purposes are. The more definite your views, the fewer people will be found to accept them. Most people will accept the assertion that education involves some kind of moral training; fewer will accept the assertion that it involves religious training; and of those who accept the principle of religious training, fewer still will agree on how far it should go and how dogmatic it should be. We may agree that the educational question can be satisfactorily answered "when we get our metaphysics, ethics, psychology, theology and politics straight enough to think straight about it." But this is a date, I suspect, at the other end of infinity. The prospect of the sages of any one of these disciplines agreeing amongst themselves seems remote; the prospect of the practitioners of these several disciplines agreeing with each other, and upon the relative contributions of their sciences to the perfecting of education, seems remoter still.

We are all, in fact, trying to persuade other people; that is, we appeal to their emotions, and often indeed to their prejudices, as well as to their reason; and the best we can do is to see that *as well as* (to our reason) does not become *instead of* (to our reason). We can at least *try* to understand our own motives, passions, and prejudices, so as to be conscious of what we are doing when we appeal to those of others. This is very difficult, because our own prejudice and emotional bias always seem to us so rational. We are perpetually engaged in pointing out the extent to which other people's reasoning is deflected by their sentiments. I am quite aware that I have been trying to persuade, though I may not be quite sure of what. But although I should be discouraged if nobody agreed with anything I have said, I should be thoroughly alarmed if everybody agreed; because a statement upon which everyone can agree, in the discussion of topics such as these, is pretty certain not to mean much. I hope, however, that my main motive has been to unsettle your minds, rather than to impose a theory; and while I have gone on defining, I have not been thinking of convincing, though you may have been thinking of your next cocktail party.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The first in a series of four lectures given in Oct and Nov 1950 at the University of Chicago under the auspices of the Committee on Social Thought. This lecture was delivered on 10 Oct and printed in *Measure*, 2 (Dec 1950), [3]-16. The TS of the first draft of this address is in King's (H2p). The four talks were reprinted posthumously as "The Aims of Education" in *To Criticize the Critic* (1965).

Professor John Nef had originally written to TSE inviting him to the University of Chicago in May 1947, but he could not accept the offer until 1950 due to various commitments. The topic of the lectures was prompted by an article by Robert M. Hutchins that criticized TSE's chapter on education in *NTDC* (see n.5 below). The lectures were written between Feb and July 1950, as TSE wrote to Professor Ricardo Quintana of the University of Wisconsin on 20 July 1950: "It is extremely unlikely that I shall be able to turn my thoughts, between now and my visit, to a new lecture subject; the improvement of the set of lectures I am offering at the University of Chicago, will consume all of my spare time."

2*. TSE's note: "Bernard Iddings Bell, *Crisis in Education* (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1949), [125]."

3. TSE worked as a schoolteacher for a term at High Wycombe Grammar School in 1915-16 and then at Highgate Junior School until the end of 1916. Between 1916 and 1919, he gave a series of Extension lectures on Elizabethan and Victorian literature as well as modern French literature under the auspices of the Oxford University Extension Delegacy and the University of London Extension Board. He was appointed as assistant in philosophy at Harvard in 1912. During his academic year as Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard, TSE delivered a series of lectures in

the spring of 1933 entitled "English 26: English Literature from 1890 to the Present Day" (4.758).

4. "Chapter VI: Notes on Education and Culture: and Conclusion" (7.256)

5*. TSE's note: "Robert M. Hutchins, 'T. S. Eliot on Education,' *Measure*, I (Winter 1950), 1-8."

Robert Maynard Hutchins (1899-1977), philosopher and educational theorist, was at the time chancellor of the University of Chicago. He wrote to TSE (letter undated) to request permission to publish his forthcoming lectures and enclosed a copy of the first issue of *Measure*, saying: "I apologize for the wholly inadequate treatment of your thoughts on education which you will find in this first issue of MEASURE. The article will have served its purpose if it prompts you to elaborate your views." TSE replied on 21 Feb 1950: "I have read the article on *Notes* which you have written in *Measure*, and feel flattered at having them taken so seriously by anyone of your authority. I must say at once, that this is the first comment I have seen on my rather scrappy remarks which has any value for myself, and I think that they may oblige me to develop and correct what I have printed. The chapter is, I admit, no more than a rag-bag of random observations, or shall I say, a disorderly quiver of poisoned arrows of various sizes, perhaps as dangerous to the archer as to his intended victims. This is not to say that I quite accept your views either, but merely to thank you for the first stimulating comments I have received."

6. Semasiology (OED): "That branch of philology which deals with the meanings of words, sense-development, and the like."

7. TSE wrote to Richard Jennings on 27 Nov 1947: "I note in passing that you make no reference to the celebrated McTaggart Theory. You will remember that McTaggart of Trinity (Cambridge) held the preposterous view that *runcible* meant *tortoise-shell*. But the essay I have been intending for years to write – *The Concept of Runcibility*, *or McTaggart Refuted*, is still in the womb of time" (King's).

8. In fact, TSE quoted from J. M. E. McTaggart's book *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic* (1896) in his doctoral dissertation (1.381).

Dialectical materialism (OED): "(in Marxist thought) a theory which reinterprets Hegel's dialectical method from a materialist, rather than idealist, position to explain change in the natural world and, above all, in the world of human history and society, in terms of the conflict of material forces; *esp.* the theory that political and historical events result from the conflict of social forces (seen as caused by material needs) and are interpretable as a series of contradictions and their solutions."

9. TSE refers to stanza III of Edward Lear's poem "The Owl and the Pussycat": "They dined on mince, and slices of quince, / Which they ate with a runcible spoon" (ll. 5-6), and to stanza III of Lear's "The Pobble Who Has No Toes": "'He has gone to fish, for his Aunt Jobiska's / 'Runcible Cat with crimson whiskers!'" (ll. 7-8). *Nonsense Songs and Stories* (London: Frederick Warne, 1888).

10. In "Self-Portrait of the Laureate of Nonsense," opening with the line: "How pleasant to know Mr. Lear!" Lear says about himself that "He weareth a runcible hat" (l. 20). The word "runcible" also appears in other poems by Lear: "runcible spoon" in "The Dolomphious Duck" (l. 3); "Runcible Raven" in "The Rural Runcible Raven" (l. 1); "runcible goose" (st. III, l. 11) and "runcible wall" (st. IV, l. 12) in "Mr. and Mrs. Discobbolos Second Part."

The source of the explanation that the word *runcible* means *tortoise-shell*, which TSE attributes to McTaggart, is untraced.

11. The existence of tables and chairs as perceived by the human senses was a standard example in introductions to the philosophy of epistemology.

12. "Slithy," "gimble," and "wabe" are nonce words in the opening lines of Lewis Carroll's nonsense poem "Jabberwocky" in *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (London: Macmillan, 1897): "'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves / Did gyre and gimble in the wabe" (21). In Humpty Dumpty's words: "'*Slithy*' means 'lithe and slimy.' 'Lithe' is the same as 'active.' You see it's like a portmanteau – there are two meanings packed up into one word" (126-27). "To '*gimble*' is to make holes like a gimblet" (128). When Alice suggests that "wabe" is "the grass-plot round a sun-dial," Humpty Dumpty replies: "It's called a 'wabe' . . . because it goes a long way before it, and a long way behind it" (128). The adjective "spongetaneous" appears in the seventh stanza of Lear's "The Daddy Long-Legs and the Fly," a poem from which TSE later quoted in "The Three Voices of Poetry" (7.824): "Then Mr. Daddy Long-legs / And Mr. Floppy Fly / Rushed downward to the foamy sea / With one sponge-taneous cry" (ll. 1-4).

13. TSE wrote to Edmund Wilson on 22 Jan 1951: "I had already been told in Chicago about the definition of 'runcible' in Webster's Dictionary. But that definition still seems to me to leave Edward Lear's use of the word unexplained. If the word is connected with 'rounceval' then it must have already undergone a change of meaning, because no kind of spoon used for pickles is likely to be especially conspicuous by its large size. If the spoon were really gigantic, you couldn't fit it through the neck of a pickle bottle. But my point is that I don't believe Edward Lear was thinking of this meaning of the word, even if he knew it. It seems to me that for him it was simply a nonsense word, and so long as I think he thought so, it seems to me that it can stand as my illustration."

14. TSE discusses briefly the OED definitions of "education" in *NTDC* (7.256).

15. OED (1933, vol 3), definition 3b: "The training of animals" (with quotations from 1538 and 1618); definition 1b: "The rearing of silkworms; *concr.*, a number of silkworms reared at one time" (quotation from 1888).

16. The first quotation for definition 1, "The process of nourishing or rearing a child or young person, an animal," is from Eucharius Roesslin's *The Byrth of Mankynde* (trans. Thomas Raynald), 1540 (i.e., 1545): "The education . . . of infantes at this tyme [1 year old]."

17. Definition 2: "The process of 'bringing up' (young persons); the manner in which a person has been 'brought up'; with reference to social station, kind of manners and habits acquired, calling or employment prepared for, etc."

18. Definition 3: "The systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life; by extension, similar instruction or training obtained in adult age. Also, the whole course of scholastic instruction which a person has received."

19. TSE quotes the fourth and last definition from the OED.

20. Joad, *About Education* (London: Faber, 1945), 23, quoted in *NTDC* (7.258). *Read*: "To equip a boy or girl to earn his or her living"; "To equip him to play his part as the citizen of a democracy."

21. The Catholic priest Edward Leen (1885-1944) made this statement in the introduction to his book *What Is Education?* (London and Dublin: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1943), 9; Leen's italics.

22. *What Is Education?*, 10; "an aristocracy of worth, not an aristocracy of accident" is italicized in Leen.

23. Robinson Crusoe is the eponymous character in Daniel Defoe's 1719 novel, who, following a shipwreck, "lived eight and twenty years, all alone in an un-inhabited island on the Coast of America" (subtitle).

24. Perhaps an echo of the opening of *The Dry Salvages*: "I do not know much about gods" (*CPP* 184 / *Poems1* 193).

25. This second lecture was delivered on 24 Oct 1950 and printed in *Measure*, 2 (Spring 1951), [191]-203.

26. See 7.518. In the preface to *Culture and Anarchy* (London: Smith, Elder, 1869), Arnold defines "culture" as "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world" (viii).

27. On 3 Feb 1929, TSE related to his mother details of a conversation with Babbitt about his education: "I was one of the victims of the 'elective system.' I have always regretted that as an undergraduate I did not stick to Latin and Greek, and some mathematics, and leave alone all the things I dabbled in year after year. As I said to Babbitt, the old system by which a student merely chose his courses in any combination according to caprice, really did the most harm to the most active minds. I was so interested in many things that I did nothing thoroughly, and was always thinking about new subjects that I wanted to study, instead of following out any one. . . . Yet I suppose that everyone regrets the imperfections of his own education – I have no one to blame but myself and partly President Eliot" (*L4* 411). TSE's library contains annotated volumes of Apuleius's picaresque novel *Metamorphoseon libri XI* (otherwise known as *The Golden Ass*), signed "T. S. Eliot, 1907," and Petronius's *Saturae et Liber Priapeorum* (King's).

28. The Harvard professors of modern languages George Ticknor, who supported the formation of an elective system along German lines, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and James Russell Lowell had all spent time in Germany before taking up their chairs. But TSE refers specifically to Charles William Eliot, who introduced at Harvard an elective system that offered students a wider range of options and granted them unlimited freedom when choosing their courses of study. President Eliot is explicitly mentioned in this context in the third lecture, where TSE describes his "exaggerated application of German methods" (7.539).

29. The British scientist Sir Humphry Davy, 1st Baronet (1778-1829), remembered for his invention of the miner's safety lamp, wrote verse in his youth, but abandoned literature for science at age nineteen. Similarly, the Scottish physicist James Clerk Maxwell (1831-79) won at the age of thirteen prizes for mathematics as well as English and poetry. A collection of his poems appeared posthumously in 1882. In his introduction to Pascal's *Pensées* (1931), TSE remarked that "his mind was active rather than accumulative; he showed from his earliest years that disposition to find things out for himself, which has characterized the infancy of Clerk Maxwell and other scientists" (4.338).

30†. In the unrevised typescript, this sentence continues: "I even know a poet who writes very good detective stories" (7.571). The poet in question is likely to be Cecil Day Lewis.

31. In Plato's dialogue *Crito*, which takes place in Socrates's cell the day before his execution, Crito urges Socrates to allow his friends to help him escape from prison. Socrates explains why it would be wrong for him to do so and highlights the duty of citizens to abide by the law. Plato's *Crito* is in the description of TSE's 1906-07 Greek literature course at Harvard (Houghton).

32. *About Education*, 40-41

33. Ju-jitsu (OED): "A Japanese system of wrestling and physical training, characterized by the use of certain techniques and holds to overcome an adversary."

34. *About Education*, 41; *read*: "he may carry at the back of his mind"

35. Joad (b. 12 Aug 1891) was three years younger than TSE.

36. Robert M. Hutchins, "T. S. Eliot on Education," *Measure*, 1 (Winter 1950), 5.

37. TSE himself offered the following definition of democracy in the previous lecture, "The Aims of Education 1": "the widest definition of democracy that *I* can find, is a society in which the maximum of responsibility is combined with the maximum of individual liberty" (7.519).

38. "Democracy is the best form of society. This Mr. Eliot does not deny. The function of the citizen of a democracy, as Mr. McIlwain has put it, is ruling and being ruled in turn for the good life of the whole. In a democracy the good man and the good citizen are identical." Hutchins, "T. S. Eliot on Education," 5.

39. TSE stated in "Leadership and Letters" in 1948: "we shall not call it democracy when the heads of the State decree that biologists must accept, on political grounds, one theory of evolution rather than another; or when they encourage or suppress, on the same grounds, the work of poets, musicians or architects" (7.326).

40. Unidentified, but likely to be Julian Huxley, with whom TSE engaged in dialogue about the aims of UNESCO (7.19); statement of "world club" untraced.

41. The Spanish-American War was fought from Apr to Aug 1898 over the question of Cuban independence. The outcome was the 1898 Treaty of Paris, according to which Spain renounced any claims on Cuba and relinquished sovereignty over the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico to the United States.

42. In his 1943 review of Mannheim's *Diagnosis of our Time*, TSE defined sociology as "a recognized science with an immense body of literature and a formidable, though brief, tradition; it is (as Dr Mannheim says) the science of Human Behaviour, synthesizing and comprehending such more restricted sciences of human behaviour as economics and psychology" (6.393).

43. TSE translates the mistranscribed "contre le réel" ("against reality"); "contre l'écueil" would be "against the reef."

44*. TSE's note: "'L'âme attachée à la poursuite du bien pur se heurte ici-bas à d'irréductibles contradictions. [. . .] "Notre vie est impossibilité, absurdité. Chaque chose que nous voulons est contradictoire avec les conditions ou les conséquences qui y sont attachées. C'est que nous sommes nous-mêmes contradiction, étant des créatures, . . ." Ayez par exemple des enfants sans compter: vous favorisez la surpopulation et la guerre (le cas du Japon est typique à cet égard); améliorez le sort matériel du peuple: vous risquez d'altérer son âme; dévouez-vous entièrement à quelqu'un: vous cessez d'exister pour lui, etc. Seul le bien imaginaire ne comporte pas de contradiction: la jeune fille qui désire une nombreuse postérité, le réformateur social qui rêve le bonheur du peuple, etc. ne se heurtent à aucun obstacle tant qu'ils ne passent pas à l'action: ils voguent à pleine voile dans un bien pur, mais fictif; le choc contre le réel [*read*: l'écueil] est le signal du réveil. Cette contradiction, signe de notre misère et de notre grandeur, nous devons l'accepter dans toute son amertume.' Thibon, quoting Weil, in his preface to *La Pesanteur et la grâce* (Paris, Plon, 1950), pp. xix-xx."

Simone Weil (1909-43), French philosopher and social activist. Her posthumous work *La Pesanteur et la Grâce* (first published in 1947) is a selection from her notebooks edited by the

French philosopher Gustave Thibon (1903-2001). TSE included this volume in his "Books of the Year" in Dec 1950 (7.576) and discussed it in his preface to *The Need for Roots* in 1952 (7.662).

45. This third lecture was delivered on 26 Oct 1950 and printed in *Measure*, 2 (Summer 1951), [285]-97.

46. In "A Commentary: That Poetry Is Made with Words" (1939), TSE maintained: "It is an error to assume that all changes, in the English language in particular, are for the worse; and it is another error to assume that the worst rot starts from the bottom: from the cinema, for example, or the picture tabloids: I am less alarmed about the decay of English when I read a murder story in the appropriate paper, than when I read the first leader in *The Times*" (5.670).

47. *Hansard* (the Official Report), printed in two columns of small type, is the edited transcript of the proceedings of both Houses of Parliament.

48*. TSE's note: "Löwe, *The Universities in Transformation* (Christian News Letter Books No. 9, London, Macmillan [1940])."

This citation is taken from chapter 1, "The Sociological Approach" (2), which begins: "In what follows I shall take a 'sociological' view of education, believing with Professor [Fred] Clarke in the 'relativity of educational theory and practice to a prevailing order'" ([1]). The German sociologist Adolf Löwe (1893-1995), who changed his name to Adolph Lowe after naturalizing as a British citizen, was professor of political economy at the University of Frankfurt am Main (1931-33); special honorary lecturer in economics and political philosophy at the University of Manchester (1933-40); and professor of economics at the New School for Social Research, New York (1941-63). He was a friend of Karl Mannheim and a member of the Moot.

49. Charles William Eliot, TSE's distant cousin, studied chemistry and foreign educational methods in Europe in 1863-65, was professor of analytical chemistry in the recently established Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1865-69), and was elected president of Harvard University in 1869. He soon introduced a program of fundamental reforms, including the replacement of the required courses for undergraduates with the elective system.

50. TSE wrote at the end of his review of John Middleton Murry's *The Free Society* (1948): "Concepts like *freedom*, and *equality*, and whatever may be taken as antithetical to freedom and equality, such as *order*, *discipline*, *rank* or *hierarchy*, get their content within particular societies, each with its own history. A living form of government (which is itself an abstraction from the way of life of a particular people) may have the most unhappy effects when set up as a *mechanism* in another society: two hundred years of India ought to have brought that fact home to us" (7.181).

51. A short article in the *Times* of 19 Nov 1948 entitled "Standardized Screw Threads" reported that an agreement had been signed to standardize all screw threads made in Great Britain, the United States, and Canada. "Manufacturers in these countries will in future make all their nuts and bolts to identical patterns – in size, number of threads per inch, and angle of threads" (4). It also pointed out that "the agreement will make machine parts of British and American manufacture interchangeable." The article appeared in the "News in Brief" section at the bottom of the page.

52. Hutchins, "T. S. Eliot on Education," 5

53. See 7.536

54. The Education Act 1944, named after the Conservative minister R. A. Butler, raised the school-leaving age from 14 to 15. An article in the *Times* of 26 Aug 1944, entitled "School-Leaving

Age / Local Authorities and Postponement," reported: "The raising of the school-leaving age next year would have meant finding 391,000 extra school places. Even with 40 children to a class – a number which it is hoped to reduce to 30 as quickly as possible – it would also have been necessary to find nearly 10,000 extra teachers. Mr. Butler has decided that neither an adequate supply of teachers nor sufficient accommodation can be provided by April 1, 1945" (2).

55. Hutchins, "T. S. Eliot on Education," 7

56. Spinoza ground lenses primarily as a mode of experimentation, rather than a source of income, as is often reported. In his review of *The Oldest Biography of Spinoza* (1927), TSE wrote that "Few people have mastered the *Ethics*, but every one knows that Spinoza polished lenses" (3.56).

57. *About Education*, 23 (see 7.518)

58. This fourth lecture was delivered on 2 Nov 1950 and printed in *Measure*, 2 (Fall 1951), [362]-75.

59. The 1944 Education Act made religious instruction compulsory in all schools, though it allowed for parental withdrawal. The act also stipulated that religious instruction "shall not include any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of any particular religious denomination" (Section 26).

60. In anthropology, *Homo faber* ("man the craftsman"), who dominates his environment with instruments, is juxtaposed with *Homo ludens* ("playing man"), whose main preoccupation is with enjoyment and pleasure.

61. The Ancient Library of Alexandria, Egypt, was one of the largest and most important libraries in the ancient world. TSE refers to the theory that the library was destroyed following the Muslim conquest of Egypt in 642 AD, though historians have also identified other possible occasions for its destruction. Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536-40) led to attacks on the veneration of some saints, pilgrimages, and shrines and to the confiscation of church land and property.

62. As an experiment in simple living, Henry David Thoreau spent two years (1845-47) in a cabin he built in a woodland near Walden Pond, Massachusetts. This experience of isolating himself to acquire a better appreciation of society resulted in the book *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854), which TSE had included in the reading list of his 1917 Extension course on Modern English Literature (1.589).

63. TSE stated in "Poetical and Prosaic Use of Words" (1943): "the reason for using the biggest dictionary, is to study the examples of the meanings of the word, the ways in which it has been used, by English authors since it was first coined. The more of these meanings that can be suggested in one's own use of the word, the better" (6.373).

64. See n.26 above

65. simpliciter (OED): "Simply, absolutely, unconditionally; without any condition or consideration"

66. See *East Coker*: "Do not let me hear / Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly" (*CPP* 179 / *Poems1* 188).

67. The epigraph to *NTDC* reads: "DEFINITION: 1. The setting of bounds; limitation (rare) - 1483 – *Oxford English Dictionary*" (7.278, n.1).

Notes . . . from T. S. Eliot

The University of Chicago Magazine, 43 (Dec 1950) 10-11[1]

ON BECOMING A POET[2]

Perhaps I can give this discussion [of the three aims of education] more appearance of reality, or at least provide light relief in the way of something more apprehensible, by asking "what sort of education should a poet have?" I don't think any parents have ever brought up a child with a view to his becoming a poet; some parents have brought up their children to be criminals; but for good and loving parents a poet is almost the last thing they could want their child to be, unless they thought it was the only way to save him from becoming a criminal.

I suppose that poets, during their tender years, usually show an interest in language and expression, and give some indication of a bent for the study of languages rather than science. This is not always true: I have known men who in childhood seemed to their parents to give promise of becoming Humphrey Davys or Clerk Maxwells, and suddenly shifted their interest to literature at 15 or 16. Certainly, the fact that a child writes verses is no indication whatever of future aptitude. Nearly everybody has written verses: a wise parent should not discourage the habit; but should attach no significance to it.

But if the young poet is of the usual kind, he will probably excel in his languages, particularly his own; and is likely to be of the type which flourishes on Latin and Greek. Certainly, the poet in later life ought to be equipped with a good knowledge of Latin and Greek literature, make himself fluent in one modern language besides his own, and have a reading knowledge of several others. How few of us, however, satisfy that qualification: I certainly do not. But what else should he study, from the point at which it is evident at least that a literary education is the most suitable for him? In the first place, he usually has to make his living, and poetry is conspicuously the occupation by which no one can expect to make a living. For most men, there is the conflict between the claims of the occupation which they make their chief concern in life, and the claims of the latent powers and faculties.

But the poet has a threefold problem to solve; he must earn a living, he must practice and perfect himself in writing, and he must cultivate other interests as well. He must do the last, not merely in order to exercise latent powers, not in order to become a cultivated man; but because he must have other interests in order to have something to write about. Almost no form of knowledge comes amiss, besides of course the knowledge of as much of the best poetry in several languages as he can assimilate, because without other intellectual interests his experience of men and women, his understanding of human emotions even, will be very narrow. The condition is that everything should be grist that comes to his mill; that he should have a lively curiosity in what men have thought and done, and be interested in these things for their own sake. He is perpetually engaged in solving the problem that every man must solve for himself, that of relating every human activity to his own; and he cannot tell how much, or what, of the subjects he investigates will be directly useful to him as a poet. But his poetry will inevitably be affected by what he knows, and the more he can assimilate the better.

And finally, he has the problem of finding a livelihood; he has sometimes to choose between a dull routine which provides little or no food for his mind, or an active and interesting one which leaves him very little time and energy. For some, this livelihood can be in various forms of journalistic or para-literary occupation; in teaching and lecturing: I even know a poet who writes very good detective stories.[3†] For others, something as remote as possible from their literary interests is desirable; something which uses none of the kind of energy that goes into poetry, and which brings him in contact with worlds far removed from those of literary and artistic circles. One cannot generalize about how a poet should earn his living in this or in any conceivable society. But the worst thing for him, perhaps, from every point of view, would be to do nothing and care about nothing, except writing poetry.

ON DEMOCRACY[4]

Democracy is the best form of society: on that we are all agreed . . . The chief point on which we do not agree is, as I have said before, what is a democracy. Most of us agree that democracy is one of the parliamentary sort: that is, there are two parties, one in, one out, and neither party must be too long in or too long out. The government of our nation is, of course, more

democratic when the party to which we adhere is in, than when the other party is in . . . The function of the good citizen in a democracy is not merely to rule and be ruled in turn, all for the good life of the whole; it is surely of the essence of democracy that those who rule in one respect are ruled in another; that every man is both ruler and ruled. To be wholly ruler, to be wholly ruled, is to lose humanity; and, in fact, the humblest worker needs to keep his own offspring in order, while the most powerful despot may be dominated, if by no other powers, by wife, or mistress, or friends. The essential of a democracy is that there is no *total* rule: for total rule means that somebody is in control of affairs about some of which he is totally incompetent. In a democracy, scientists and scholars and artists may rule in their own spheres; it is not a democracy when a symphony can be deviationist, or a melancholy poem about an unhappy love affair defeatist and decadent, or a biological theory anti-Marxist.

THE NEW ILLITERACY[5]

. . . Now we are at the stage at which we are not only simply trying to educate more people – we are already committed to providing everybody with something called education. We are coming to the end of our educational frontier. Long ago, we decided that everybody must be taught to read, write and cipher, we did not need to look too closely into the question of what education meant. Every stage of development of our society presents us not only with new, but with *more difficult* problems, as well as with the same problems in more difficult forms: for we have now to cope with a new illiteracy, and a much more difficult illiteracy to overcome – namely, the illiteracy of that part of the population which has had its elementary schooling but has become illiterate through lack of occasion to use what it has been taught. This secondary illiteracy is a new phenomenon. It is aggravated by the effect of radio and cinema, and by the replacement, in popular periodicals, of words by pictures.

I am convinced that readers in England – readers of anything – can be classified according to the size of type to which they can give attention. One can say that the educated man is one who can read the report of the Parliamentary Debates from beginning to end, skipping intelligently, of course. There is a larger number who can read a few paragraphs, if the type is large enough. There is an increasing proportion of the population which can read only headlines.

THE PAST[6]

It should be an aim of education to maintain the continuity of our culture – and neither continuity, nor a respect for the past, implies standing still. More than ever, we should look to education today to preserve us from the error of pure contemporaneity. We look to institutions of education to maintain a knowledge and understanding of the past. And the past has to be re-interpreted for each generation, for each generation brings its own prejudices and fresh misunderstandings. All this may be comprehended in the term history; but history includes the study, not only of the great dead languages, but of the past of modern languages, including our own. Particularly, indeed, our own, for we need to understand the way in which our words have been used in the past, how they have developed and altered their meanings, in order to understand how we are using them ourselves.

NOTES

1. These notes were extracted from the unrevised typescripts of the second, third, and fourth lectures on "The Aims of Education," which TSE delivered in Oct and Nov 1950 at the University of Chicago. For the revised and annotated versions, see 7.524, 7.537, and 7.550. The subtitles were inserted by the editors of the *University of Chicago Magazine*.

2. Taken from the second lecture

3†. This sentence is omitted in "The Aims of Education 2" (7.529). The poet in question is likely to be Cecil Day Lewis.

4. Taken from the second lecture

5. Taken from the third lecture

6. Taken from the fourth lecture

The Television Habit

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (20 Dec 1950) 7

Sir, – In your issue of December 17 you announce that the B. B. C. proposes to spend over £4m. during the next three years on the development of television.[1] I have just returned from a visit to the United States, where television (though not, I believe, more highly developed technically) has become an habitual form of entertainment in many more households than here.[2] Among persons of my own acquaintance I found only anxiety and apprehension about the social effects of this pastime, and especially about its effect (mentally, morally, and physically) upon small children.[3]

Before we endeavour to popularize it still further in this country, might it not be as well if we investigated its consequences for American society and took counsel with informed American opinion about possible safeguards and limitations?[4] The fears expressed by my American friends were not such as could be allayed by the provision of only superior and harmless programmes: they were concerned with the television habit, whatever the programme might be.

Your obedient servant,

T. S. ELIOT

24, Russell Square. W.C.1, Dec. 17

NOTES

1. The article actually appeared in the issue of 16 Dec 1950, in which the director-general of the BBC announced plans to devote more than 60 percent of its capital investment program to the development of television (6).

2. TSE was in America from Sept to Dec 1950 and spent time with his two sisters and his late brother's family. An article published in the *Times* of 19 Dec 1950 confirms that in the United States there were nine million television sets in use at the time, whereas in England only 555,000 sets had been licensed (7). TSE admitted in his 1958 interview with Leslie Paul, "A Conversation with T. S. Eliot": "There's a deterioration, it seems to me, in the quality of amusement as it becomes more mass entertainment and as the media for mass entertainment become more highly developed. The cinema first; now, television." *Kenyon Review*, 27 (Winter [1964/]1965), 14.

3. TSE had already voiced his concerns about the social effects of television in "Religious Drama: Mediaeval and Modern" (1937): "Mechanisation comes to kill local life: with the universal

picture palace, you may travel the world over and be unable to avoid Shirley Temple; television may have a still more deadly effect on local life" (5.528).

4. In July 1953, TSE received letters from the Earl of Derby and Ronald Simms about the newly formed Popular Television Association, which aimed to "awaken the national conscience to the dangers of monopoly . . . in the rapidly expanding field of Television, and to provide the public . . . with alternative programmes." Invited to become a vice president in support of the association, TSE replied to Simms on 23 July: "I have seldom . . . had so much difficulty in making up my mind over an important issue . . . My personal horror of television hardly helps me to simplify the issue! . . . I am certainly distrustful of monopoly, and of government monopoly in particular. But after giving a good deal of thought to the matter I can only come to this conclusion: that I think that accepting a Vice-Presidency in any association implies complete conviction, as well as being in a position to argue on behalf of the cause in question, with those who are waverers or inclined to the opposite view. So I feel that while remaining sympathetic, I should not at this stage identify myself with one view or the other."

Books of the Year Chosen by Eminent Contemporaries

The Sunday Times (24 Dec 1950) 3[1]

I must point out first that I am a publisher, and that therefore I am precluded from mentioning any book published by my own firm. And, being a publisher, I read very few books: as every publisher knows, publishers read only manuscripts. In the second place, I never read contemporary fiction – with one exception: the works of Simenon concerned with Inspecteur Maigret, of which I may mention the most recent, *L'amie de Madame Maigret*.[2]

Of the few books not published by my own firm that I have seen during the past year, I call to mind especially the Archbishop of York's *Church and State In England* (Hodder and Stoughton), the important edition of *Pascal's Pensées*, by the late H. F. Stewart (Routledge), and Mr. Christopher Dawson's Gifford Lectures, *Religion and Culture* (Sheed & Ward).[3] And I should not like to omit a monumental work of which I have read only certain chapters, Ernst Robert Curtius's *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter*.[4] A book edited by Gustave Thibon, *La Pesanteur et la grâce*, by the late Simone Weil, is almost too important to be included in one's list of reading for one year only.[5]

T. S. ELIOT, O.M.

NOTES

1. Dated 19 Dec 1950 on CC

2. The Belgian novelist Georges Joseph Christian Simenon (1903-89) published, between 1931 and 1972, seventy-five novels and twenty-eight short stories featuring the fictional police detective Commissaire Jules Maigret. *L'Amie de Madame Maigret* [*The Friend of Madame Maigret*] was first published in French in Dec 1949. In his autobiographical note in the *Harvard College Class of 1910: Fiftieth Anniversary Report* (1960) , TSE later commented that the statement he had sent for the report in 1935 (5.247) "can stand, with two important qualifications – I now prefer claret to burgundy, and I prefer Inspector Maigret to Arsène Lupin" (8.420).

3. The Archbishop of York, Cyril Garbett (1875-1955), defined his book *Church and State in England* (1950) as "an argument for some readjustment in the existing relationship between Church and State. It attempts to show that, expect possibly in early days, the Church of England never has had complete freedom" (5). Hugh Fraser Stewart died before he could complete his bilingual edition of *Pascal's Pensées* (1950). TSE had reviewed Stewart's study *The Secret of Pascal* in 1941 (6.192). TSE quoted from Dawson's *Religion and Culture* (1948) in his 1949 address "Die Idee einer europäischen Gesellschaft" (7.398, 409).

4. On receiving his copy of *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* [*European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*] (1948), TSE wrote to Curtius on 14 Feb 1949: "What I am really writing for, very tardily, is to thank you for your magnificent book. I do not know when I shall ever find time to read the whole of it, but I can see that there are chapters which I am very anxious to read as soon as possible" (Bonn). He later praised it as a "masterly work" in his 1956 tribute to the German scholar (8.149).

5. In "The Aims of Education 2," delivered two months earlier, TSE defined Weil's posthumous work *La Pesanteur et la Grâce* (Paris: Plon, 1950; first published 1947), a selection from her notebooks edited by the French philosopher Gustave Thibon, as a "very profound and original book" before quoting from Thibon's introduction (7.536). TSE also discussed the book in his preface to *The Need for Roots* (1952) (7.662).

Message to *Merkur*

Merkur (1950) [2][1]

Four years ago, in some broadcast talks reprinted in my *Notes towards the definition of Culture*, I referred to my experience in editing a quarterly review from 1922 to 1939, and said:

> I am still of the opinion, twenty-three years after I began, and seven years after I ended, that the existence of such a network of independent reviews, at least one in every capital of Europe, is necessary for the transmission of ideas – and to make possible the circulation of ideas while they are still fresh. . . . In any one such periodical, of course, there must be much that will be of interest only to readers of its own nation and language. But their co-operation should continually stimulate that circulation of influence of thought and sensibility, between nation and nation in Europe, which fertilises and renovates from abroad the literature of each one of them.[2]

At the time of which I wrote – twenty-five to thirty years ago – there was at least one such review of the kind in every country of Western Europe. I am glad to have the opportunity of joining myself with other surviving editors, my colleagues of that period, in saluting *MERKUR*, which has already proved itself a worthy successor to the best of our company;[3] and I add my expression of hope that its work may be supplemented and stimulated by other periodicals of the same quality and kindred aims in our respective countries.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. At the request of the editors of the German monthly periodical *Merkur: Deutsche Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken*, the German poet and critic Hans Egon Holthusen wrote to TSE on 28 Feb 1950 inviting him, as the editor of one of the distinguished European-oriented journals of the interwar years, to contribute a testimonial to a publicity pamphlet for the fourth volume of the journal. TSE included this message of goodwill in his reply of 6 Mar. The untitled text, in italics, appears on the verso of the title page.

Merkur, founded in 1947, published several of TSE's articles in German translation, from "What Is a Classic?" in 1948 to "The Frontiers of Criticism" in 1957.

2. TSE quotes from the second talk of "The Unity of European Culture" (7.272), first printed in 1946 (6.713-14). He wrote in the postscript to his letter to Holhusen: "I should have given the

title in German and referred to the translation published by Suhrkamp, but I cannot lay my hand on a copy at the moment, so I shall have to ask you to make the necessary alteration. Incidentally, it would be best for regularity's sake to use that translation for the quotation which will be found in one of the three broadcast talks appended to the book."

3. Holthusen informed TSE that the other editors approached to contribute to this publicity pamphlet were Ortega y Gasset (*Revista de Occidente*), Max Rychner (*Neue Schweizer Rundschau*), and Jean Paulhan (*Nouvelle Revue française*). TSE wrote in his reply of 6 Mar: "I shall be very glad also to have my name appear with such names as those of Ortega, Rychner and Paulhan."

Poetry and Film: Mr. T. S. Eliot's Views

The Church Times, 134 (2 Feb 1951) 78[1]

The subject "Poetry and Film" comprehends two questions. The first is: Of what use can the film be to poetry? The second: Of what use can poetry be to the film? The first question is obviously the more appropriate for me; the second is that on which you would perhaps be more interested to hear what the film producer would have to say.

We cannot go into the general question of the *pros* and *cons* of recorded speech and direct readings; that can be considered sufficiently in relation to gramophone records. We are concerned, furthermore, only with dramatic poetry, which, in the widest sense, means poetry which is merely a part of a total work of art. In non-dramatic poetry, the visual imagery is to be supplied by the reader's imagination; and it is the function of the poet to stimulate the imagination of each individual reader to the utmost of its capacity.

In dramatic poetry, the scene, human beings in action, must be provided by the co-operation of producer, actor and designer. The precedence of the author is due primarily to the fact that the play starts with him, and secondarily, to the fact that any play of permanent value must be susceptible of an indefinite variety of interpretation by different producers and actors, and by successive generations of producers and actors.

When we try to strike a balance between the respective advantages of stage and screen for the drama, we must keep in mind that there are three kinds of plays: those which are suitable only for the stage, those which are possible only on the screen, and those which can be adapted for either. It is convenient to confine ourselves here to the last, considering the fact that we assume that *Murder in the Cathedral* belongs to this category.[2]

I have, in the course of the work on this film, made two observations. The first is pretty obvious, and was brought to our notice several years ago by Sir Laurence Olivier's *Henry V.*: the pleasure that we get from the complete audibility of every word in every part of the house.[3] This, of course, is of particularly great value with a verse play, in which every word and phrase is important, and in which any inaccuracy on the part of the actor, or any inaudibility to the audience, is a much more serious blemish than for a play in prose.

DIRECTING EYES –

The second observation is more tentative, and perhaps more open to dispute. But anyone who has viewed films with critical attention, must be aware that in a film we are constantly, and without knowing it, being directed what to look at. In a stage play you may be looking at one moment at the actor who is speaking; at another moment watching the face of the person addressed, or observing the behaviour of other characters on the stage. If you go repeatedly to the same play, you may choose to look at different actors in a different order, for you certainly cannot observe everybody and everything simultaneously. But in a film, the lens of the camera is constantly telling you what to look at – it may be a close-up of the actor's hand, by the movement of which he betrays the emotion not visible in his face.

Now Mr. Hoellering (the producer and director of the film, *Murder in the Cathedral*) recently made a very interesting documentary film employing this power of the camera.[4] It took one through an exhibition of works of sculpture; it decided for you the order in which you looked at the figures, and pointed contrasts between them; the camera took you round a statue, showing the masses and planes from different angles. The camera directed by the producer was in fact making the observer look at the object with the eye of a particular critic; it was supplying the ordinary onlooker, to a surprising degree, with the trained vision of the critic.

– AND EARS

It has struck me, since seeing this film, that the technique of the film can do with the spoken word, and probably will do, something of the same thing to direct the audience's ears, that we have seen it do for the audience's eyes. I remembered then, several years later, that one or two speeches in *Henry V.* to which I had never given special attention in reading or at stage performances, emerged with a fresh and startling beauty and importance. In other words, the producer has it within his power to teach the audience how to listen, as well as to teach it how to see. This is of especial importance for poetic drama, and places indefinite possibilities within the reach of the intelligent and conscious producer.

Of the value of poetry to the film I shall say little, because from my point of view it is a corollary to the proposition that poetry has still a function on the stage, and this proposition I have already defended on several occasions. The question of poetry on the screen, therefore, is to my mind simply a question of whether the higher possibilities of the cinema are to be realized,

or whether it is to sink to the lowest level of what the greatest number of empty-headed people are willing to look at. I will only add this: I know that a poet who turns to the theatre, after years of practice in other kinds of poetry, has to be willing to submit himself to an arduous and painful discipline. But film technique is not stage technique; and if he is to proceed to write for the screen, he will see that he has a great deal still to learn.

NOTES

1. An editorial heading explains: "The following is the text of Mr. T. S. Eliot's address at the opening of the exhibition of dresses and settings for the film *Murder in the Cathedral*. We produced a very brief summary of his speech last week." Subheadings in the text were inserted by the editors of the *Church Times*. The exhibition of the scenic settings, costumes, and properties, housed in St. Stephen's Church, St. John's Wood, was opened by the Bishop of London on 19 Jan 1951. This was reported on the front page of the *Church Times* of 26 Jan in an article entitled "Studio Exhibition of 'Murder in the Cathedral' / Mr T. S. Eliot on the Poet's Work in Films / Vestments, Tapestries, Sculpture and Scenery for the Screen."

2. The article printed in the issue of 26 Jan reported: "Later Mr. Eliot told Pressmen that it was some time before he could be persuaded that his play would be effective on celluloid. Though *Murder in the Cathedral* happened to be suitable for both stage and screen, this was not the case with most plays, he thought" ([57]).

3. *Henry V* is a 1944 film adaptation of Shakespeare's play directed by and starring Laurence Olivier.

4. *Shapes and Forms* (1950), directed by George Hoellering, is a twenty-five-minute film on primitive and modern sculpture.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The opening paragraph of TSE's four-page typescript was omitted in the *Church Times*:

When I began to think about what I should say this afternoon I decided that I should have to make very full notes, to be sure of having enough material for five minutes. After a little reflection I came to the conclusion that I had better write it out in full, in order to make sure that I should not talk too long. The more I thought about it the more difficult the problem of selection was likely to become.

Foreword to *D. H. Lawrence and Human Existence*, by Father William Tiverton

London: Rockliff Publishing Corp. Ltd., 1951. Pp. xv + 140; Foreword, vii-[viii].

The author of this book is a priest of an Anglican religious order, whom I know. If he has chosen to publish his book under the name of William Tiverton, it is only to make the point that his views are personal.[1] The common reader, especially if he knows nothing of the monastic life, is apt to presume that the member of an order can be only a spokesman for his community. This author writes with the full knowledge and approval of his superiors, but speaks only for himself.[2]

My reason for contributing a preface is not the fact that I know the author. It is that I think this is a serious piece of criticism of Lawrence, of a kind for which the time is now due. We have a number of books about Lawrence by people who knew him; we need books about him by critics who know him only through his works.[3] To have been associated with Lawrence was, evidently, for those who were attracted, or alternately attracted and repelled, by that dominating, cross-grained and extreme personality, a very important part of their lives, an experience which had to be recorded in print.[4] But perhaps one of the reasons why Lawrence's books are now less read by young people than they were twenty and thirty years ago, is that the books about him give the impression that he is a man to read about, rather than an author to read: a Johnson surrounded by a shoal of Boswells, some of them less tender towards the great man than was Johnson's biographer.[5]

This is not the only reason why Lawrence's work needs to be examined from a new perspective. He was an impatient and impulsive man (or so I imagine him to have been; for, like the author of this book, I never knew him). He was a man of fitful and profound insights, rather than of ratiocinative powers; and therefore he was an impatient man: he expressed some of his insights in the form least likely to make them acceptable to most of his contemporaries, and sometimes in a form which almost wilfully encouraged misunderstanding. If the foolish or the ill-disposed chose to regard him as a blasphemer, a "fascist," or a pornographer, Lawrence would not put

himself out to persuade them. Wrong he often was (I think) from ignorance, prejudice, or drawing the wrong conclusions in his conscious mind from the insights which came to him from below consciousness:[6] and it will take time to dissociate the superficial error from the fundamental truth. To me, also, he seems often to write very badly; but to be a writer who had to write often badly in order to write sometimes well.[7] After being misunderstood, he is in danger of being ignored. As for his religious attitude (of the development of which the author of this book has something to say)[8] we can now begin to see better how much was ignorance, rather than hostility; for Lawrence was an ignorant man in the sense that he was unaware of how much he did not know.[9] His strictures upon Christianity (and indeed upon Buddhism) are often ill-informed;[10] at other times they go straight to the heart of the matter; and no Christian ought to feel sure that he is religious-minded enough, to ignore the criticism of a man who, without being a Christian, was primarily and always religious.[11]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. On 28 Mar 1950, on the author's request and after reading the script, TSE agreed to write the preface, stating that "something must be said about the author and his anonymity, and I wonder whether you would prefer to say this yourself in your introduction . . . or to suggest to me what you want said on this point in the preface." William Tiverton, pseudonym of Rev. Father Martin (born William Robert) Jarrett-Kerr (1912-91), C. R., was a monk of the Anglican religious Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield, in West Yorkshire, which TSE visited in 1938-39.

The book was published on 16 Feb 1951. When it was harshly reviewed by F. R. Leavis in *Scrutiny* of Aug 1951, under the title "Mr. Eliot and Lawrence" (66-72), TSE wrote to console Jarrett-Kerr on 20 Aug, regretful "that Leavis should merely have made use of the book as a pretext for attacking my own views, and that your book itself is not reviewed. . . . If he had wished to talk about my own views and not yours, he should have done so in editorial notes, and not have presented his remarks under the guise of a notice of the book." Leavis went on to make his attack on TSE's views of Lawrence a central feature in his *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955).

2. In the "Author's Preface," Tiverton remarked: "My thanks are due to various friends, who will not want to be named" (xi).

3. TSE evidently refers to the following works, which are all quoted in the book: *Early Life of D. H. Lawrence*, by Ada Lawrence and Stuart Gelder (1932); *Lawrence and Brett: A Friendship*, by Dorothy Brett (1933); *Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence*, by John Middleton Murry (1933); *D. H. Lawrence: Reminiscences and Correspondence*, by Achsah and Earl Brewster (1934); *Not I, But the Wind*, by Frieda Lawrence (1934); *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*, by E. T. [Jessie Chambers] (1935); *A Poet and Two Painters*, by Knud Merrild (1938). TSE may also refer to John Middleton Murry's *Son of Woman: The Story of D. H. Lawrence*, which he reviewed in 1931 (4.313), and to Richard Aldington's *D. H. Lawrence: An Appreciation* (1950).

4. In his review of Murry's *Son of Woman*, TSE asserted: "A fateful influence he must have been upon those who experienced his power" (4.318).

5. In *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1791), James Boswell incorporated conversations that he had recorded for his journals. He also included more personal details, painting a picture not only of Johnson's public life but also of Johnson the man.

6. In *ASG*, TSE criticized Lawrence for his lack "not so much of information as of the critical faculties which education should give, and an incapacity for what we ordinarily call thinking," while recognizing his "extraordinarily keen sensibility and capacity for profound intuition – intuition from which he commonly drew the wrong conclusions" (5.42).

7. TSE's ambivalent assessment of Lawrence's style began in "The Letters of J. B. Yeats" (1917), where he stated: "D. H. Lawrence lacks time to write one good novel in ten years, but will find time to write five or ten bad ones in that period" (1.549). In 1927, he went on to censure Lawrence's "romans splendides et extrêmement mal écrits" ["splendid and extremely ill-written novels"] (3.84, 90), though he admitted in 1931: "Not only are there magnificent descriptions here and there, everywhere, throughout Lawrence's work, but there are marvellous passages – in nearly every book, I believe – of dialogue or narrative, in which Lawrence really gets out of himself and inside other people" (4.314).

8. Tiverton writes: "Lawrence seems to me much closer to the Christian view of sex, properly understood, than were many of his opponents (within and without the Church)" (80); "Lawrence re-defines morality in his own way. And that way is essentially religious, almost mystical" (86). For Tiverton's more sustained discussion of Lawrence's religious views, see pp. 108-26.

9. In the book, Tiverton quotes a passage from TSE's introduction to *Revelation* (1937) (see 5.486): "Lawrence, even had he acquired a great deal more knowledge and information than he ever came to possess, would always have remained uneducated. By being 'educated' I mean having such an apprehension of the contours of the map of what has been written in the past, as to see instinctively where everything belongs, and approximately where anything new is likely to belong; it means, furthermore, being able to allow for all the books one has not read and the things one does not understand – it means some understanding of one's own ignorance" (7).

10. Tiverton discusses Lawrence's "misunderstanding of Christianity" in the chapter "Resurrection," whereby, for example, "Lawrence sees Christianity purely as 'love thy neighbour' or 'turn the other cheek'" (112). In a letter to Robert Pratt Barlow of 30 Mar 1922, quoted in the book, Lawrence states: "One realizes how very barbaric the substratum of Buddhism is. I shrewdly suspect that the high-flownness of Buddhism altogether exists mostly on paper: and that its denial of the soul makes it always rather barren, even if philosophically, etc., more perfect" (116).

11. Tiverton quotes the following extract from Lawrence's letter to Edward Garnett of 22 Apr 1914: "But primarily I am a passionately religious man. . . . But you should see the religious, earnest, suffering man in me first, and then the flippant or common things after" (6).

Preface to *Thoughts for Meditation: A Way to Recovery from Within*, an anthology selected and arranged by N. Gangulee

London: Faber & Faber, 1951. Pp. 163; Preface, 11-14.[1]

If I had thought that this anthology was suitable only for readers who had already entered upon the spiritual life, I should not have had the audacity to introduce it; and if it were only a collection of morsels for nibblers I should not wish to do so. The author, in calling this book *Thoughts for Meditation*, means what he says. These are selections from among many extracts from his reading over many years; and they are passages which have borne his test of repeated meditation. They are intended for everyone who is curious about those emotions, and states of soul, which are to be found, so to speak, only beyond the limit of the visible spectrum of human feeling, and which can be experienced only in moments of illumination, or by the development of another organ of perception than that of everyday vision. But they can be of service to the reader only on one hard condition – that he is willing to try to learn to read.

Very few people, I suspect, know how to read – in the sense of being able to read for a variety of motives and to read a variety of books each in the appropriate way. We all read for diversion, or in order to satisfy a temporary curiosity; most of us read also under the necessity of acquiring information or a grasp of the contents of some book for an immediate end. For many workers, it is difficult to read a book unless it has some bearing on their own work; a professional reviewer may come to find it difficult to read a book except for the purpose of reviewing it; and a publisher may come to find it difficult to read a book except as a manuscript to be accepted or rejected. Philosophy is difficult, unless we discipline our minds for it; the full appreciation of poetry is difficult for those who have not trained their sensibility by years of attentive reading. But devotional reading is the most difficult of all, because it requires an application, not only of the mind, not only of the sensibility, but of the whole being.

Thoughts for Meditation is a book of which, after the first examination – that in which one runs through a book to get a general view of the contents

and a grasp of the design – I myself should not choose to read very much at a time. To read two or three passages (at first, choosing passages in the same section),[2] to attend closely to every word, to ponder on the quotations read for a little while and try to fix them in my mind, so that they may continue to affect me while my attention is engrossed with the affairs of the day: that is enough for me in twenty-four hours, and enough, I imagine, even for those more practised in meditation than I.

I do not suggest that it is wholly unprofitable to acquaint oneself with some mystical literature without attempting to penetrate the world of the authors. To be wholly ignorant of this literature, to be unacquainted with examples of it from several languages and civilizations, is to lack some vital information about Man; just as much, as if we read only those historical works which ignore the action of religion upon history. But to learn from these writers needs something more than mere acquaintance. We have to abandon some of our usual motives for reading. We must surrender the Love of Power – whether over others, or over ourselves, or over the material world. We must abandon even the Love of Knowledge. We must not be distracted by interest in the personality of particular authors, or by delight in the phrases in which they have expressed their insights. What these writers aim at, in their various idioms, in whatever language or in the terms of whatever religion, is the Love of God. They gave their lives to this: and their destination is not one which we can reach any quicker than they did, or without the same tireless activity and tireless passivity.

There are some readers who, attracted perhaps by curiosity about "the occult," regard Asiatic literature as the sole repository of religious understanding; there are others who, perhaps under the prejudice that mysticism is something morbid and perverse, refuse to venture further than a narrow Christian tradition. For both kinds of reader, it is salutary to learn that the Truth is not "occult," and that it is not wholly confined to their own religious tradition, or on the other hand to an alien culture and religion which they regard with superstitious awe; and to learn how frequently contemplatives of religions and civilizations remote from each other are saying the same thing. I am aware also that there are readers who persuade themselves that there is an "essence" in all religions which is the same, and that this essence can be conveniently distilled and preserved, while every particular religion is rejected. Such readers may perhaps be reminded that no man has ever climbed to the higher stages of the spiritual life, who has not been a believer in a particular religion or at least a particular philosophy; and that

the authors who are represented in this volume, would all have repudiated the suggestion that their religion or philosophy did not matter. It was only in relation to his own religion that the insights of any one of these men had its significance to him, and what they say can only reveal its meaning to the reader who has his own religion of dogma and doctrine in which he believes. With these thoughts in mind, I attach a special value to an anthology which places side by side passages from Christian, Jewish, Moslem, Hindu and Buddhist scriptures and devotional writings.[3]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE wrote to Gangulee on 1 Mar 1950 to inform him that he had accepted his book, having received assurance from Faber "that it is not too long for the price at which we want to fix such a book," and stating that by the time Gangulee returned from a visit to Switzerland "I shall have my preface to submit to you." The anthology was eventually published on 9 Mar 1951. TSE wrote in the dust-jacket blurb: "Dr. N. Gangulee is a man of deep spirituality, and of wide knowledge of the literature of devotion of Europe and Asia . . . He wants his readers to meditate on what they read . . . The word *meditation* frightens many people, as representing an arduous and possibly fruitless occupation of a few specialists: but [he] means to tell us that the form of meditation for which his book is intended to provide the means, is something that everyone can practice, and something by which every person can benefit."

Nagendranath Gangulee, or Gangopadhyay (1889-1954), Indian writer, anthologist, and agriculturalist, was a son-in-law of the poet Rabindranath Tagore. A sometime businessman, labor organizer, land manager, and professor of agriculture at the University of Calcutta (1921-31), Gangulee held a doctorate in soil biology from the University of London and settled permanently in England in 1932. TSE had previously written a preface to Gangulee's anthology *The Testament of Immortality* (London: Faber, 1940) (6.129).

2. The book is divided into ten untitled sections.

3. Extracts are taken from the New Testament, Thomas à Kempis, Pascal, the Nikayas, the Upanishads, Sufi mysticism, the Koran, the Gita, Buddha, Gandhi, Isaiah, Spinoza, Milton, St. John of the Cross, John Donne, Rabindranath Tagore, Nietzsche, and others. TSE concluded his preface to Gangulee's anthology *The Testament of Immortality* with a similar praise: "the perceptive reader will be struck not least by the fusion of Eastern and Western culture in the anthologist's mind and heart" (6.130). In the notes to *The Waste Land*, line 309, TSE pointed out: "The collocation of these two representatives of eastern and western asceticism, as the culmination of this part of the poem, is not an accident" (*CPP* 79 / *Poems1* 75).

Poetry and Drama[1]

I

Reviewing my critical output for the last thirty-odd years, I am surprised to find how constantly I have returned to the drama, whether by examining the work of the contemporaries of Shakespeare, or by reflecting on the possibilities of the future. It may even be that people are weary of hearing me on this subject. But, while I find that I have been composing variations on this theme all my life, my views have been continually modified and renewed by increasing experience; so that I am impelled to take stock of the situation afresh at every stage of my own experimentation.[2†]

As I have gradually learned more about the problems of poetic drama, and the conditions which it must fulfil if it is to justify itself, I have made a little clearer to myself, not only my own reasons for wanting to write in this form, but the more general reasons for wanting to see it restored to its place. And I think that if I say something about these problems and conditions, it should make clearer to other people whether and if so why poetic drama has anything potentially to offer the playgoer, that prose drama cannot. For I start with the assumption that if poetry is merely a decoration, an added embellishment, if it merely gives people of literary tastes the pleasure of listening to poetry at the same time that they are witnessing a play, then it is superfluous. It must justify itself dramatically, and not merely be fine poetry shaped into a dramatic form. From this it follows that no play should be written in verse for which prose is *dramatically* adequate. And from this it follows, again, that the audience, its attention held by the dramatic action, its emotions stirred by the situation between the characters, should be too intent upon the play to be wholly conscious of the medium.

Whether we use prose or verse on the stage, they are both but means to an end. The difference, from one point of view, is not so great as we might think. In those prose plays which survive, which are read and produced on the stage by later generations, the prose in which the characters speak is as remote, for the best part, from the vocabulary, syntax, and rhythm of our ordinary speech – with its fumbling for words, its constant recourse to approximation, its disorder, and its unfinished sentences – as verse is. Like

verse, it has been written, and rewritten. Our two greatest prose stylists in the drama – apart from Shakespeare and the other Elizabethans who mixed prose and verse in the same play – are, I believe, Congreve and Bernard Shaw. A speech by a character of Congreve or of Shaw has – however clearly the characters may be differentiated – that unmistakable personal rhythm which is the mark of a prose style, and of which only the most accomplished conversationalists – who are for that matter usually monologuists – show any trace in their talk.[3] We have all heard (too often!) of Molière's character who expressed surprise when told that he spoke prose. But it was M. Jourdain who was right, and not his mentor or his creator: he did not speak prose – he only talked.[4] For I mean to draw a triple distinction: between prose, and verse, and our ordinary speech which is mostly below the level of either verse or prose. So if you look at it in this way, it will appear that prose, on the stage, is as artificial as verse: or alternatively, that verse can be as natural as prose.

But while the sensitive member of the audience will appreciate, when he hears fine prose spoken in a play, that this is something better than ordinary conversation, he does not regard it as a wholly different language from that which he himself speaks, for that would interpose a barrier between himself and the imaginary characters on the stage. Too many people, on the other hand, approach a play which they know to be in verse, with the consciousness of the difference. It is unfortunate when they are repelled by verse, but can also be deplorable when they are attracted by it – if that means that they are prepared to enjoy the play and the language of the play as two separate things. The chief effect of style and rhythm in dramatic speech, whether in prose or verse, should be unconscious.

From this it follows that a mixture of prose and verse in the same play is generally to be avoided: each transition makes the auditor aware, with a jolt, of the medium. It is, we may say, justifiable when the author wishes to produce this jolt: when, that is, he wishes to transport the audience violently from one plane of reality to another. I suspect that this kind of transition was easily acceptable to an Elizabethan audience, to whose ears both prose and verse came naturally; who liked high-falutin and low comedy in the same play; and to whom it seemed perhaps proper that the more humble and rustic characters should speak in a homely language, and that those of more exalted rank should rant in verse. But even in the plays of Shakespeare some of the prose passages seem to be designed for an effect of contrast which, when achieved, is something that can never become old-fashioned. The knocking at the gate in *Macbeth* is an example that

comes to everyone's mind;[5] but it has long seemed to me that the alternation of scenes in prose with scenes in verse in *Henry IV* points an ironic contrast between the world of high politics and the world of common life. The audience probably thought they were getting their accustomed chronicle play garnished with amusing scenes of low life; yet the prose scenes of both Part I and Part II provide a sardonic comment upon the bustling ambitions of the chiefs of the parties in the insurrection of the Percys.[6]

To-day, however, because of the handicap under which verse drama suffers, I believe that in verse drama prose should be used very sparingly indeed;[7†] that we should aim at a form of verse in which everything can be said that has to be said; and that when we find some situation which is intractable in verse, it is merely because our form of verse is inelastic. And if there prove to be scenes which we cannot put in verse, we must either develop our verse, or avoid having to introduce such scenes. For we have to accustom our audiences to verse to the point at which they will cease to be conscious of it; and to introduce prose dialogue would only be to distract their attention from the play itself to the medium of its expression. But if our verse is to have so wide a range that it can say anything that has to be said, it follows that it will not be "poetry" all the time. It will only be "poetry" when the dramatic situation has reached such a point of intensity that poetry becomes the natural utterance, because then it is the only language in which the emotions can be expressed at all.

It is indeed necessary for any long poem, if it is to escape monotony, to be able to say homely things without bathos, as well as to take the highest flights without sounding exaggerated. And it is still more important in a play, especially if it is concerned with contemporary life. The reason for writing even the more pedestrian parts of a verse play in verse instead of prose is, however, not only to avoid calling the audience's attention to the fact that it is at other moments listening to poetry. It is also that the verse rhythm should have its effect upon the hearers, without their being conscious of it. A brief analysis of one scene of Shakespeare's may illustrate this point. The opening scene of *Hamlet* – as well constructed an opening scene as that of any play ever written – has the advantage of being one that everybody knows.[8]

What we do not notice, when we witness this scene in the theatre, is the great variation of style. Nothing is superfluous, and there is no line of poetry which is not justified by its dramatic value. The first twenty-two lines are built of the simplest words in the most homely idiom. Shakespeare had worked for a long time in the theatre, and written a good many plays, before

reaching the point at which he could write those twenty-two lines. There is nothing quite so simplified and sure in his previous work. He first developed conversational, colloquial verse in the monologue of the character part – Faulconbridge in *King John*, and later the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. It was a much further step to carry it unobtrusively into the dialogue of brief replies. No poet has begun to master dramatic verse until he can write lines which, like these in *Hamlet*, are *transparent*. You are consciously attending, not to the poetry, but to the meaning of the poetry. If you were hearing *Hamlet* for the first time, without knowing anything about the play, I do not think that it would occur to you to ask whether the speakers were speaking in verse or prose. The verse is having a different effect upon us from prose; but at the moment, what we are aware of is the frosty night, the officers keeping watch on the battlements, and the foreboding of a tragic action.[9†] I do not say that there is no place for the situation in which part of one's pleasure will be the enjoyment of hearing beautiful poetry – providing that the author gives it, in that place, dramatic inevitability. And of course, when we have both seen a play several times and read it between performances, we begin to analyse the means by which the author has produced his effects. But in the immediate impact of this scene we are unconscious of the medium of its expression.

From the short, brusque ejaculations at the beginning, suitable to the situation and to the character of the guards – but not expressing more character than is required for their function in the play – the verse glides into a slower movement with the appearance of the courtiers Horatio and Marcellus.

> Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy, . . .[10]

and the movement changes again on the appearance of Royalty, the ghost of the King, into the solemn and sonorous

> What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night, . . .[11]

(and note, by the way, this anticipation of the plot conveyed by the use of the verb *usurp*); and majesty is suggested in a reference reminding us whose ghost this is:

> So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
> He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.[12]

There is an abrupt change to staccato in Horatio's words to the Ghost on its second appearance; this rhythm changes again with the words

We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.[13]

The scene reaches a resolution with the words of Marcellus:

It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long; . . .[14]

and Horatio's answer:

So have I heard and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.
Break we our watch up.[15]

This is great poetry, and it is dramatic; but besides being poetic and dramatic, it is something more. There emerges, when we analyse it, a kind of musical design also which reinforces and is one with the dramatic movement. It has checked and accelerated the pulse of our emotion without our knowing it. Note that in these last words of Marcellus there is a deliberate brief emergence of the poetic into consciousness. When we hear the lines

But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill,

we are lifted for a moment beyond character, but with no sense of unfitness of the words coming, and at this moment, from the lips of Horatio. The transitions in the scene obey laws of the music of dramatic poetry. Note that the two lines of Horatio which I have quoted twice are preceded by a line of the simplest speech which might be either verse or prose:

So have I heard and do in part believe it,

and that he follows them abruptly with a half line which is hardly more than a stage direction:

Break we our watch up.

It would be interesting to pursue, by a similar analysis, this problem of the double pattern in great poetic drama – the pattern which may be examined from the point of view of stagecraft or from that of the music. But I think that the examination of this one scene is enough to show us that verse is not merely a formalization, or an added decoration, but that it intensifies the drama. It should indicate also the importance of the unconscious effect of the verse upon us. And lastly, I do not think that this effect is felt only by those members of an audience who "like poetry" but also by those who go for the play alone. By the people who do not like poetry, I mean those who cannot sit down with a book of poetry and enjoy reading it: these people also, when they go to a play in verse, should be affected by the poetry. And these are the audiences whom the writer of such a play ought to keep in mind.

At this point I might say a word about those plays which we call *poetic*, though they are written in prose. The plays of John Millington Synge form rather a special case, because they are based upon the idiom of a rural people whose speech is naturally poetic, both in imagery and in rhythm. I believe that he even incorporated phrases which he had heard from these country people of Ireland. The language of Synge is not available except for plays set among that same people.[16] We can draw more general conclusions from the plays in prose (so much admired in my youth, and now hardly even read) by Maeterlinck. These plays are in a different way restricted in their subject matter; and to say that the characterization in them is dim is an understatement. I do not deny that they have some poetic quality. But in order to be poetic in prose, a dramatist has to be so consistently poetic that his scope is very limited.[17] Synge wrote plays about characters whose originals in life talked poetically, so he could make them talk poetry and remain real people. The poetic prose dramatist who has not this advantage, has to be too poetic. The poetic drama in prose is more limited by poetic convention or by our conventions as to what subject matter is poetic, than is the poetic drama in verse. A really dramatic verse can be employed, as Shakespeare employed it, to say the most matter-of-fact things.

Yeats is a very different case, from Maeterlinck or Synge. A study of his development as a dramatist would show, I think, the great distance he went, and the triumph of his last plays. In his first period, he wrote plays in verse about subjects conventionally accepted as suitable for verse, in a metric which – though even at that early stage having the personal Yeats rhythm – is not really a form of speech quite suitable for anybody except mythical kings and

queens. His middle-period *Plays for Dancers* are very beautiful, but they do not solve any problem for the dramatist in verse: they are poetic prose plays with important interludes in verse. It was only in his last play *Purgatory* that he solved his problem of speech in verse, and laid all his successors under obligation to him.[18]

II

Now, I am going to venture to make some observations based on my own experience, which will lead me to comment on my intentions, failures, and partial successes, in my own plays. I do this in the belief that any explorer or experimenter in new territory may, by putting on record a kind of journal of his explorations, say something of use to those who follow him into the same regions and who will perhaps go farther.

The first thing of any importance that I discovered, was that a writer who has worked for years, and achieved some success, in writing other kinds of verse, has to approach the writing of a verse play in a different frame of mind from that to which he has been accustomed in his previous work. In writing other verse, I think that one is writing, so to speak, in terms of one's own voice: the way it sounds when you read it to yourself is the test. For it is yourself speaking. The question of communication, of what the reader will get from it, is not paramount: if your poem is right to you, you can only hope that the readers will eventually come to accept it. The poem can wait a little while; the approval of a few sympathetic and judicious critics is enough to begin with; and it is for future readers to meet the poet more than half way. But in the theatre, the problem of communication presents itself immediately. You are deliberately writing verse for other voices, not for your own, and you do not know whose voices they will be. You are aiming to write lines which will have an immediate effect upon an unknown and unprepared audience, to be interpreted to that audience by unknown actors rehearsed by an unknown producer. And the unknown audience cannot be expected to show any indulgence towards the poet. The poet cannot afford to write his play merely for his admirers, those who know his non-dramatic work and are prepared to receive favourably anything he puts his name to. He must write with an audience in view which knows nothing and cares nothing, about any previous success he may have had before he ventured into the theatre. Hence one finds out that many of the things one likes to do, and knows how to do, are out of place; and that every line must be judged by a new law, that of dramatic relevance.

When I wrote *Murder in the Cathedral* I had the advantage for a beginner, of an occasion which called for a subject generally admitted to be suitable for verse. Verse plays, it has been generally held, should either take their subject matter from some mythology, or else should be about some remote historical period, far enough away from the present for the characters not to need to be recognizable as human beings, and therefore for them to be licensed to talk in verse. Picturesque period costume renders verse much more acceptable. Furthermore, my play was to be produced for a rather special kind of audience – an audience of those serious people who go to "festivals" and expect to have to put up with poetry – though perhaps on this occasion some of them were not quite prepared for what they got. And finally it was a religious play, and people who go deliberately to a religious play at a religious festival expect to be patiently bored and to satisfy themselves with the feeling that they have done something meritorious. So the path was made easy.

It was only when I put my mind to thinking what sort of play I wanted to do next, that I realized that in *Murder in the Cathedral* I had not solved any general problem; but that from my point of view the play was a dead end. For one thing, the problem of language which that play had presented to me was a special problem. Fortunately, I did not have to write in the idiom of the twelfth century, because that idiom, even if I knew Norman French and Anglo-Saxon, would have been unintelligible.[19†] But the vocabulary and style could not be exactly those of modern conversation – as in some modern French plays using the plot and personages of Greek drama – because I had to take my audience back to an historical event; and they could not afford to be archaic, first because archaism would only have suggested the wrong period, and second because I wanted to bring home to the audience the contemporary relevance of the situation. The style therefore had to be *neutral*, committed neither to the present nor to the past. As for the versification, I was only aware at this stage that the essential was to avoid any echo of Shakespeare, for I was persuaded that the primary failure of nineteenth-century poets when they wrote for the theatre (and most of the greatest English poets had tried their hand at drama) was not in their theatrical technique, but in their dramatic language; and that this was due largely to their limitation to a strict blank verse which, after extensive use for non-dramatic poetry, had lost the flexibility which blank verse must have if it is to give the effect of conversation. The rhythm of regular blank verse had become too remote from the movement of modern speech.[20†] Therefore

what I kept in mind was the versification of *Everyman*, hoping that anything unusual in the sound of it would be, on the whole, advantageous. An avoidance of too much iambic, some use of alliteration, and occasional unexpected rhyme, helped to distinguish the versification from that of the nineteenth century.[21]

The versification of the dialogue in *Murder in the Cathedral* has therefore, in my opinion, only a *negative* merit: it succeeded in avoiding what had to be avoided, but it arrived at no positive novelty: in short, in so far as it solved the problem of speech in verse for writing to-day, it solved it for this play only, and provided me with no clue to the verse I should use in another kind of play. Here, then, were two problems left unsolved: that of the idiom and that of the metric (it is really one and the same problem), for general use in any play I might want to write in future. I next became aware of my reasons for depending, in that play, so heavily upon the assistance of the chorus. There were two reasons for this, which in the circumstances justified it. The first was that the essential action of the play – both the historical facts and the matter which I invented – was somewhat limited. A man comes home, foreseeing that he will be killed, and he is killed. I did not want to increase the number of characters, I did not want to write a chronicle of twelfth-century politics, nor did I want to tamper unscrupulously with the meagre records as Tennyson did (in introducing Fair Rosamund, and in suggesting that Becket had been crossed in love in early youth).[22] I wanted to concentrate on death and martyrdom. The introduction of a chorus of excited and sometimes hysterical women, reflecting in their emotion the significance of the action, helped wonderfully. The second reason was this: that a poet writing for the first time for the stage, is much more at home in choral verse than in dramatic dialogue. This, I felt sure, was something I could do, and perhaps the dramatic weaknesses would be somewhat covered up by the cries of the women. The use of a chorus strengthened the power, and concealed the defects of my theatrical technique. For this reason I decided that next time I would try to integrate the chorus more closely into the play.

I wanted to find out also, whether I could learn to dispense altogether with the use of prose. The two prose passages in *Murder in the Cathedral* could not have been written in verse.[23] Certainly, with the kind of dialogue verse which I used in that play, the audience would have been uncomfortably aware that it was verse they were hearing. A sermon cast in verse is too unusual an experience for even the most regular churchgoers:[24†] nobody could have

responded to it as a sermon at all. And in the speeches of the knights, who are quite aware that they are addressing an audience of people living eight hundred years after they themselves are dead, the use of platform prose is intended of course to have a special effect: to shock the audience out of their complacency. But this is a kind of trick: that is, a device tolerable only in one play and of no use for any other. I may, for aught I know, have been slightly under the influence of *St. Joan*.[25]

I do not wish to give you the impression that I would rule out of dramatic poetry these three things: historical or mythological subject-matter, the chorus, and traditional blank verse. I do not wish to lay down any law that the only suitable characters and situations are those of modern life, or that a verse play should consist of dialogue only, or that a wholly new versification is necessary. I am only tracing out the route of exploration of one writer, and that one myself. If the poetic drama is to reconquer its place, it must, in my opinion, enter into overt competition with prose drama. As I have said, people are prepared to put up with verse from the lips of personages dressed in the fashion of some distant age; therefore[26†] they should be made to hear it from people dressed like ourselves, living in houses and apartments like ours, and using telephones and motor cars and radio sets. Audiences are prepared to accept poetry recited by a chorus, for that is a kind of poetry recital, which it does them credit to enjoy. And audiences (those who go to a verse play because it is in verse) expect poetry to be in rhythms which have lost touch with colloquial speech. What we have to do is to bring poetry into the world in which the audience lives and to which it returns when it leaves the theatre; not to transport the audience into some imaginary world totally unlike its own, an unreal world in which poetry is tolerated. What I should hope might be achieved, by a generation of dramatists having the benefit of our experience, is that the audience should find, at the moment of awareness that it is hearing poetry, that it is saying to itself: "*I* could talk in poetry too!" Then we should not be transported into an artificial world; on the contrary, our own sordid, dreary daily world would be suddenly illuminated and transfigured.

I was determined, therefore, in my next play to take a theme of contemporary life, with characters of our own time living in our own world. *The Family Reunion* was the result. Here my first concern was the problem of the versification, to find a rhythm close to contemporary speech, in which the stresses could be made to come wherever we should naturally put them, in uttering the particular phrase on the particular occasion. What I worked

out is substantially what I have continued to employ: a line of varying length and varying number of syllables, with a caesura and three stresses. The caesura and the stresses may come at different places, almost anywhere in the line; the stresses may be close together or well separated by light syllables; the only rule being that there must be one stress on one side of the caesura and two on the other. In retrospect, I soon saw that I had given my attention to versification, at the expense of plot and character. I had, indeed, made some progress in dispensing with the chorus; but the device of using four of the minor personages, representing the Family, sometimes as individual character parts and sometimes collectively as chorus, does not seem to me very satisfactory. For one thing, the immediate transition from individual, characterized part to membership of a chorus is asking too much of the actors: it is a very difficult transition to accomplish. For another thing, it seemed to me another trick, one which, even if successful, could not have been applicable in another play. Furthermore, I had in two passages used the device of a lyrical duet further isolated from the rest of the dialogue by being written in shorter lines with only two stresses. These passages are in a sense "beyond character," the speakers have to be presented as falling into a kind of trance-like state in order to speak them. But they are so remote from the necessity of the action that they are hardly more than passages of poetry which might be spoken by anybody; they are too much like operatic arias. The member of the audience, if he enjoys this sort of thing, is putting up with a suspension of the action in order to enjoy a poetic fantasia: these passages are really less related to the action than are the choruses in *Murder in the Cathedral*.

I observed that when Shakespeare, in one of his mature plays, introduces what might seem a purely poetic line or passage, it never interrupts the action, or is out of character, but on the contrary, in some mysterious way supports both action and character. When Macbeth speaks his so often quoted words beginning

To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow, [V.v.19][27†]

or when Othello, confronted at night with his angry father-in-law and friends, utters the beautiful line

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them, [I.ii.59]

we do not feel that Shakespeare has thought of lines which are beautiful poetry and wishes to fit them in somehow, or that he has for the moment

come to the end of his dramatic inspiration and has turned to poetry to fill up with. The lines are surprising, and yet they fit in with the character; or else we are compelled to adjust our conception of the character in such a way that the lines will be appropriate to it. The lines spoken by Macbeth reveal the weariness of the weak man who had been forced by his wife to realize his own half-hearted desires and her ambitions, and who, with her death, is left without the motive to continue. The line of Othello expresses irony, dignity, and fearlessness; and incidentally reminds us of the time of night in which the scene takes place. Only poetry could do this; but it is *dramatic* poetry: that is, it does not interrupt but intensifies the dramatic situation.

It was not only because of the introduction of passages which called too much attention to themselves as poetry, and could not be dramatically justified, that I found *The Family Reunion* defective: there were two weaknesses which came to strike me as more serious still. The first was, that I had employed[28†] far too much of the strictly limited time allowed to a dramatist, in presenting a situation, and not left myself enough time, or provided myself with enough material, for developing it in action. I had written what was, on the whole, a good first act; except that for a first act it was much too long. When the curtain rises again, the audience is expecting, as it has a right to expect, that something is going to happen. Instead, it finds itself treated to a further exploration of the background: in other words, to what ought to have been given much earlier if at all. The beginning of the second act presents much the most difficult problem to producer and cast: for the audience's attention is beginning to wander. And then, after what must seem to the audience an interminable time of preparation, the conclusion comes so abruptly that we are, after all, unready for it. This was an elementary fault in mechanics.

But the deepest flaw of all, was in a failure of adjustment between the Greek story and the modern situation. I should either have stuck closer to Aeschylus or else taken a great deal more liberty with his myth.[29] One evidence of this is the appearance of those ill-fated figures, the Furies. They must, in future, be omitted from the cast, and be understood to be visible only to certain of my characters, and not to the audience. We tried every possible manner of presenting them. We put them on the stage, and they looked like uninvited guests who had strayed in from a fancy dress ball. We concealed them behind gauze, and they suggested a still out of a Walt Disney film. We made them dimmer, and they looked like shrubbery just outside the window. I have seen other expedients tried: I have seen them signalling

from across the garden, or swarming on to the stage like a football team, and they are never right. They never succeed in being either Greek goddesses or modern spooks. But their failure is merely a symptom of the failure to adjust the ancient with the modern.

A more serious evidence is that we are left in a divided frame of mind, not knowing whether to consider the play the tragedy of the mother or the salvation of the son. The two situations are not reconciled. I find a confirmation of this in the fact that my sympathies now have come to be all with the mother, who seems to me, except perhaps for the chauffeur, the only complete human being in the play; and my hero now strikes me as an insufferable prig.

Well, I had made some progress in learning how to write the first act of a play, and I had – the one thing of which I felt sure – made a good deal of progress in finding a form of versification and an idiom which would serve all my purposes, without recourse to prose, and be capable of unbroken transition between the most intense speech and the most relaxed dialogue. You will understand, after my making these criticisms of *The Family Reunion*, some of the errors that I endeavoured to avoid in designing *The Cocktail Party*.[30] To begin with, no chorus, and no ghosts. I was still inclined to go to a Greek dramatist for my theme, but I was determined to do so merely as a point of departure, and to conceal the origins so well that nobody would identify them until I pointed them out myself. In this at least I have been successful; for no one of my acquaintance (and no dramatic critics) recognized the source of my story in the *Alcestis* of Euripides. In fact, I have had to go into detailed explanation to convince them – I mean, of course, those who were familiar with the plot of that play – of the genuineness of the inspiration. But those who were at first disturbed by the eccentric behaviour of my unknown guest, and his apparently intemperate habits and tendency to burst into song, have found some consolation in having their attention called[31†] to the behaviour of Heracles in Euripides' play.[32]

In the second place, I laid down for myself the ascetic rule to avoid poetry which could not stand the test of strict dramatic utility: with such success, indeed, that it is perhaps an open question whether there is any poetry in the play at all. And finally, I tried to keep in mind that in a play, from time to time, something should happen; that the audience should be kept in the constant expectation that something is going to happen; and that, when it does happen, it should be different, but not too different, from what the audience had been led to expect.

I have not yet got to the end of my investigation of the weaknesses of this play, but I hope and expect to find more than those of which I am yet aware. I say "hope" because while one can never repeat a success, and therefore must always try to find something different, even if less popular, to do, the desire to write something which will be free of the defects of one's last work is a very powerful and useful incentive. I am aware that the last act of my play only just escapes, if indeed it does escape, the accusation of being not a last act but an epilogue; and I am determined to do something different, if I can, in this respect. I also believe that while the self-education of a poet trying to write for the theatre seems to require a long period of disciplining his poetry, and putting it, so to speak, on a very thin diet in order to adapt it to the needs of the stage, he may find that later,[33†] when (and if) the understanding of theatrical technique has become second nature, he can dare[34†] to make more liberal use of poetry and take greater liberties with ordinary colloquial speech. I base this belief on the evolution of Shakespeare, and on some study of the language in his late plays.[35†]

In devoting so much time to an examination of my own plays, I have, I believe, been animated by a better motive than egotism. It seems to me that if we are to have a poetic drama, it is more likely to come from poets learning how to write plays, than from skilful prose dramatists learning to write poetry. That some poets can learn how to write plays, and write good ones, may be only a hope, but I believe a not unreasonable hope; but that a man who has started by writing successful prose plays should then learn how to write good poetry, seems to me extremely unlikely. And, under present-day conditions, and until the verse play is recognized by the larger public as a possible source of entertainment, the poet is likely to get his first opportunity to work for the stage only after making some sort of reputation for himself as the author of other kinds of verse. I have therefore wished to put on record, for what it may be worth to others, some account of the difficulties I have encountered, and the mistakes into which I have fallen, and the weaknesses I have had to try to overcome.

I should not like to close without attempting to set before you, though only a dim outline,[36†] the ideal towards which poetic drama should strive. It is an unattainable ideal: and that is why it interests me, for it provides an incentive towards further experiment and exploration, beyond any goal which there is prospect of attaining. It is a function of all art to give us some perception of an order in life, by imposing an order upon it.[37] The painter works by selection, combination, and emphasis among the elements of the

visible world; the musician in the world of sound. It seems to me that beyond the nameable, classifiable emotions and motives of our conscious life when directed towards action – the part of life which prose drama is wholly adequate to express – there is a fringe of indefinite extent, of feeling which we can only detect, so to speak, out of the corner of the eye and can never completely focus; of feeling of which we are only aware in a kind of temporary detachment from action. There are great prose dramatists – such as Ibsen and Chekhov – who have at times done things of which I would not otherwise have supposed prose to be capable, but who seem to me, in spite of their success, to have been hampered in expression by writing in prose.[38] This peculiar range of sensibility can be expressed by dramatic poetry, at its moments of greatest intensity. At such moments, we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express. We can never emulate music, because to arrive at the condition of music would be the annihilation of poetry, and especially of dramatic poetry.[39] Nevertheless, I have before my eyes a kind of mirage of the perfection of verse drama, which would be a design of human action and of words, such as to present at once the two aspects of dramatic and of musical order. It seems to me that Shakespeare achieved this at least in certain scenes – even rather early, for there is the balcony scene of *Romeo and Juliet* – and that this was what he was striving towards in his late plays.[40] To go as far in this direction as it is possible to go, without losing that contact with the ordinary everyday world with which drama must come to terms, seems to me the proper aim of dramatic poetry. For it is ultimately the function of art, in imposing a credible order upon ordinary reality, and thereby eliciting some perception of an order *in* reality, to bring us to a condition of serenity, stillness, and reconciliation; and then leave us, as Virgil left Dante, to proceed toward a region where that guide can avail us no farther.[41]

NOTE TO "POETRY AND DRAMA"

As I explained in my Preface, the passage in this essay analysing the first scene of *Hamlet* was taken from a lecture delivered some years previously at Edinburgh University. From the same Edinburgh lecture I have extracted the following note on the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*:[42]

In Romeo's beginning, there is still some artificiality:

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do intreat her eyes

To twinkle in their spheres till they return.[43]

For it seems unlikely that a man standing below in the garden, even on a very bright moonlight night, would see the eyes of the lady above flashing so brilliantly as to justify such a comparison. Yet one is aware, from the beginning of this scene, that there is a musical pattern coming, as surprising in its kind as that in the early work of Beethoven. The arrangement of voices – Juliet has three single lines, followed by Romeo's three, four and five, followed by her longer speech – is very remarkable. In this pattern, one feels that it is Juliet's voice that has the leading part: to her voice is assigned the dominant phrase of the whole duet:

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep: the more I give to thee
The more I have, for both are infinite.[44]

And to Juliet is given the key-word "lightning," which occurs again in the play, and is significant of the sudden and disastrous power of her passion, when she says

'Tis like the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere one can say "it lightens."[45]

In this scene, Shakespeare achieves a perfection of verse which, being perfection, neither he nor anyone else could excel – for this particular purpose. The stiffness, the artificiality, the poetic decoration, of his early verse has finally given place to a simplification to the language of natural speech, and this language of conversation again raised to great poetry, and to great poetry which is essentially dramatic: for the scene has a structure of which each line is an essential part.

TEXTUAL NOTE

AM and *P&D* (UK and US) began with this section, italicized in *AM* and *P&D* (UK) and omitted in *OPP*:

I.

It is a customary act of respect that the lecturer on a foundation should begin by saying something about the man in whose name the lectureship was founded.[46†] The fact that between Theodore Spencer and myself there had been a long friendship terminated only by death, was (I believe) the primary reason for my being asked to inaugurate this series: as it was certainly my primary reason for accepting the honour.[47†]

Except when there has been some accident to fix it in my memory, I find that I seldom remember the occasion of my first meeting with anyone who has subsequently become an associate or

friend. I am not now sure whether I first met Theodore Spencer while he was an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge, or on some later visit that he paid to England – for he loved Cambridge and liked to return there.[48] I had certainly met him in England, and probably several times, before I came to Harvard as Norton Professor in 1932. But it was during that year, when I saw him almost every day, at Eliot House, or in his own home, or in the company of mutual friends, that we were closely associated; and it was through this constant frequentation that I came to love and appreciate the man. He put his time most generously at my disposal; helped me at every juncture with a course of lectures to a small class which he himself had been instrumental in selecting; and there was no detail of daily life in which he was not ready to give aid, and no material need which he was not anxious to anticipate.[49] And the day on which he did not drop in for a chat before lunch, was always a duller day than the others.

After 1933 I saw him, of course, only at intervals. He visited England several times – I remember that he was present, in Cambridge, at the Encaenia at which I received a doctor's degree, and I remember his pleasure in the event.[50] Between visits, we carried on a desultory correspondence. In 1938, or perhaps early in 1939, the rumour reached us in England that economies were being effected, which might be adverse to his promotion or security of tenure at Harvard, and I was a party to the manoeuvres of some of his friends in Cambridge, England, toward obtaining for him a Lectureship there.[51] In 1939 he was appointed to a Lectureship at Cambridge University, but owing to the outbreak of war, the immediate reduction in the numbers of students in the English Tripos,[52†] and the consequent reduction in the number of tutors, it was deemed best that his appointment should be deferred. This was a great disappointment to his friends in England; but on the other hand, we had the pleasure of hearing of his reappointment to Harvard as "visiting lecturer from Cambridge University." It was not long before he received promotion.

I should like to add a note which I hope is not indiscreet. When the august position of Boylston Professor became vacant, Ted Spencer was not one to covet that post for himself.[53†] He wrote to me privately, to ask whether I would consider the position if my name were put forward. Well, there were several reasons, both private and public, why I could not regard myself as eligible: not the least of which was my lack of scholarship – I think I told him that I should have had to spend all my spare time reading the books I ought to have read, and would have no leisure left for writing. My delight and satisfaction were great when I read that he himself had received that distinguished appointment.[54]

Though I do not remember our first meeting, I remember very clearly our last. It was in Cambridge, Massachusetts, just before my return to London, and only a few weeks before his death.[55] He was full of enthusiasm for the work he was to undertake that year; he appeared in better health, and more radiantly happy, than I had ever seen him; and I thought that he had many years of both scholarly and creative work and of useful influence before him.

I do not need to remind those who knew him, or indeed those who were even slightly acquainted with him, of the charm of his personality, his interest in human beings, his gaiety, sense of humour and conviviality – with a bearing such that he could put his pupils on terms of informal equality, without ever losing his dignity or their respect. He had several traits, in happy combination, which made him a good teacher. His standards of scholarship were high, and his view of English studies was humane; he mixed with men of letters in New York and London, as well as in the universities; and was perfectly at ease in society, whether intellectual society or not, so that he knew his students as human beings, not merely as candidates for degrees. He had a

sensitive appreciation of the best in contemporary literature; and his own poetic gift was genuine. His poetry had developed, and would I believe have gone on to still greater strength after he had further assimilated and re-created the powerful influence of Yeats. But I have left to the last, mention of those characteristics which most endeared him as a friend: humility, charity, generosity, and what I can only call a fundamental goodness.

In choosing a subject, I have had in mind that it should be a subject in some way related to Theodore Spencer's interests, and that it should be a subject on which he himself would have liked to hear me.

At this point in *P&D* (UK) part I, TSE breaks away and starts on a new page part II, which is the beginning of the essay in *OPP*: "Reviewing my critical output for the last thirty-odd years . . ." In *P&D* (US), which is not divided into two parts, the paragraph above is different and contains an additional section omitted in both *AM* and *P&D* (UK):

In choosing a subject for this lecture, I have had in mind, first, that it should be a subject in some way related to Theodore Spencer's interests, second, that it should be a subject on which he himself would have liked to hear me speak, and third, that it should be a subject about which this audience might like to hear me speak. Poetic drama was certainly something that Spencer cared about: I hardly need to mention his studies of Shakespeare, or his fascinated interest in the poetry of Shakespeare's contemporaries;[56] but I should like to remind you of those performances of Elizabethan drama by the members of Eliot House which Spencer did so much to inspire and organize and in which he participated with so much zest (I remember in particular a performance of *The Shoemaker's Holiday* in which the late Master, Roger Merriman, played the part of the King with all the majesty appropriate to the Master of a Harvard House).[57] As for myself, this is no new subject for me; in fact, reviewing my critical output for the last thirty-odd years . . .

NOTES

1. As printed in *OPP*. The first Theodore Spencer Memorial Lecture delivered at Harvard University on 21 Nov 1950. TSE's friend Ted ("Matty") Spencer, then Boylston Professor at Harvard, had died suddenly of a heart attack on 18 Jan 1949 at age forty-nine, but TSE did not learn of the death until he received an obituary clipping from the Master of Eliot House, John Finley, in early Apr 1950. "I had no idea, of course, that there was any danger of this," TSE replied on 5 Apr. "I always thought him a person of a kind of repressed excessive intensity. I think that Matty was, in a way, a very religious man. . . . I mean that he had a capacity for religious fanaticism, without the discipline and control of a dogma or a church." TSE accepted Harvard Professor Harry Levin's invitation to give the first annual lecture in June 1950 and finished it in Chicago on 28 Oct, delaying a letter of that date to John Hayward "until I had broken the back of this memorial lecture for Ted Spencer, which has been difficult, as my time is spent in seeing people and recovering from them" (King's).

The lecture was first printed in the *Atlantic Monthly*, 187 (Feb 1951), 30-37 (hereafter *AM*), then published as a book in the United States by Harvard University Press on 15 Mar 1951 (*P&D* (US)), and in the United Kingdom by Faber on 28 Sept 1951 (*P&D* (UK)). The US edition is not divided into sections. It is based, in part, on an earlier lecture, "The Aims of Poetic Drama" (7.376), delivered in Germany in 1949 and printed in the periodical *ADAM International Review*

in Nov 1949. Substantive differences in the texts are noted; minor punctuation and spelling differences are not recorded. Two TS drafts of the lecture are in King's (P22).

2†. In *P&D* (US), this is followed by: "And I hope that I have profited by this experience."

3. Though TSE often praised Congreve's and Shaw's prose styles, he did not believe them to be examples of "realistic" speech. In "The Future of Poetic Drama" (1938), for example, he argued: "By 'prose' I mean something at least a little better than what the ordinary man speaks: I do not believe that people in the seventeenth century talked like Congreve's characters, and we know that the middle classes of the last generation did not employ the beautiful English of Mr. Shaw" (5.645).

In "The Idealism of Julien Benda" (1928), TSE had described Shaw as "the master of a lucid and witty dialogue prose hardly equalled since Congreve, and of a certain power of observation, squandering these gifts in the service of wornout home-made theories, as in the lamentable *Methusaleh*" (3.441).

4. Monsieur Jourdain, the title character of Molière's play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1671), expressed astonishment when he was informed by his philosophy master that he spoke in prose: "Par ma foi, il y a plus de quarante ans que je dis de la prose, sans que j'en susse rien; et je vous suis le plus obligé du monde de m'avoir appris cela" (II.vi). *Œuvres complètes de Molière*, ed. Charles Louandre, vol 3 (Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1910), 251. *Trans*: By my faith! I have been speaking prose for more than forty years without knowing anything about it, and I am most obliged to you for having informed me of that. TSE had quoted from this scene in "Marivaux" (1919) (2.3).

5. In *Macbeth* II.iii, the murder of Duncan at the hands of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is immediately followed by Lennox and Macduff knocking at the castle gate.

6. The contrast between prose and poetry in *Henry IV* helped Shakespeare differentiate between the two worlds of the play, with the commoners speaking in ordinary unpolished prose and the nobility in sophisticated courtly poetry. TSE had remarked in this respect in *UPUC*: "I think that when we turn to *Henry IV* we often feel that what we want to re-read and linger over are the Falstaff episodes, rather than the political highfalutin of the King's party and its adversaries. That is an error. As we read from Part I to Part II and see Falstaff, not merely gluttonising and playing pranks indifferent to affairs of State, but leading his band of conscripts and conversing with local magnates, we find that the relief has become serious contrast, and that political satire issues from it" (4.600).

7†. In *P&D* (UK): "I believe that prose should be used very sparingly indeed;"

8. As TSE explains in his "Note to 'Poetry and Drama'" (7.603), the analysis of the first scene of *Hamlet* is revised from the 1937 lecture "The Development of Shakespeare's Verse. Two Lectures" (5.546-48).

9†. In *P&D* (UK): "of an ominous action."

10. l. 23 (Marcellus to Horatio and Bernardo)

11. l. 46 (Horatio to Ghost); *read*: "Who art thou,"

12. ll. 62-63 (Horatio to Marcellus)

13. ll. 143-46 (Marcellus to Horatio and Bernardo)

14. ll. 157-60 (Marcellus to Horatio and Bernardo); *read*: "Some say," . . . "Our Saviour's"

15. ll. 165-68 (Horatio to Marcellus and Bernardo); *read*: "But look," . . . "eastward hill."

16. In "Poetic Drama To-Day and To-Morrow" (1940), TSE maintained that "the characters of Congreve or of Synge speak in a common rhythm and a common idiom, developed far beyond

the formlessness of ordinary speech. That the rhythm and the idiom is based upon the actual speech of the society to which their plays are related, I do not deny . . . this is a quality which the best prose drama shares with the best verse drama: that the dramatist neither echoes the speech of a past age, nor invents an idiom unrelated to any age, but develops the best speech of the men and women whom he has known who talk his own language" (6.93).

17. In "'Rhetoric' and Poetic Drama" (1919), TSE had already censored the plays of Maurice Maeterlinck "whose drama, in failing to be dramatic, fails also to be poetic. Maeterlinck has a literary perception of the dramatic and a literary perception of the poetic, and he joins the two; the two are not, as sometimes they are in the work of Rostand, fused" (2.86).

18. TSE discussed Yeats's development as a dramatist in "Yeats" (1940): "Yeats did not quite invent a new metre, but the blank verse of his later plays shows a great advance towards one; and what is most astonishing is the virtual abandonment of blank verse metre in 'Purgatory.' . . . Yeats's purification of his verse becomes much more evident in the four *Plays for Dancers* and in the two in the posthumous volume: those, in fact, in which he had found his right and final dramatic form" (6.85).

19†. TSE added in pencil "to the audience" in his copy of *AM* (King's HC2.1.4[7]).

20†. TSE crossed out "modern" in his copy of *AM*.

21. The anonymous *Everyman*, which TSE taught in his 1918 Extension course (1.754), is an allegorical morality play first printed in the early sixteenth century. When reflecting on his experience of writing dramatic verse in "The Need for Poetic Drama" (1936), TSE recommended making use of "suggestions from more remote drama, too remote for there to be any danger of imitation, such as *Everyman*, and the late mediaeval morality and mystery plays, and the great Greek dramatists" (5.404).

22. Rosamund Clifford (ca. 1150-76), often called "The Fair Rosamund," was according to legend a beautiful lover of Henry II, who kept her in a bower where she was discovered by Queen Eleanor. When offered the choice of poison or dagger, she chose the former. In Tennyson's verse drama *Becket* (1879, produced in 1893), she is presented with a third option, namely, to marry Sir Reginald Fitzurse, one of the King's knights and Becket's murderers. Though Eleanor says to Becket in I.ii: "'Tis known you are midwinter to all women" (London: Macmillan, 1885, 41), in V.ii, he hints at his attachment to a "fair-hair'd Norman maid" living in his mother's house who died of leprosy (186).

23. The interlude in which the archbishop preaches in the cathedral on Christmas morning 1170 (*CPP* 260-62) and the Knights addressing the audience after the murder (*CPP* 276-80) are in prose.

24†. In *P&D* (UK): "churchgoer:"

25. In "The Epilogue" to G. B. Shaw's play *Saint Joan* (1924), set in 1456, an envoy from the 1920s brings news that Joan of Arc is to be canonized as a saint. In his *Criterion* commentary of Oct 1924, TSE had criticized Shaw's Joan of Arc as "perhaps the greatest sacrilege of all Joans: for instead of the saint or the strumpet of the legends to which he objects, he has turned her into a great middle-class reformer, and her place is a little higher than Mrs. Pankhurst" (2.542-43).

26†. In *P&D* (UK) "therefore" is not present.

27†. In *P&D* (UK): "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow"; *read*: "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow"

28†. In *P&D* (UK): "I had taken"

29. In *The Family Reunion* (1939), TSE drew on Aeschylus's trilogy the *Oresteia* in his use of three of Aeschylus's dramatic figures: the chorus, the Eumenides, and Orestes.

30. *The Cocktail Party* was first produced at the Edinburgh Festival in Aug 1949 and published on 9 Mar 1950.

31†. In *P&D* (UK): "after I have called their attention"

32. In Euripides' *Alcestis* (438 BC), Admetus is mourning the death of his wife Alcestis when his friend Heracles arrives at the palace, unaware of what had happened. Admetus decides not to inform Heracles of Alcestis's death. When Heracles becomes intoxicated and annoys the servants, one of them reveals to him that they are mourning Alcestis. Determined to save her, Heracles challenges Death at Alcestis's funeral and brings a veiled lady to the palace. When Admetus removes the veil, he seems to discern Alcestis, who has been brought back to life.

33†. In *P&D* (UK): "the needs of the stage, there may be a later stage,"

34†. In *P&D* (UK): "at which he can dare"

35†. In *P&D* (US), this is followed by: "But to give reason for this belief involves an examination and defense of Shakespeare's late plays as plays; and this obviously is the subject for a separate essay."

36†. In *P&D* (UK): "though only in dim outline"

37. Possibly an echo of TSE's well-known statement on Joyce's method in "*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth" (1923): "It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (2.478).

38. In his tribute to Anton Chekhov (1944), TSE claimed that "the only two dramatists, within that period, who seem to me to be of any possible value for the writer of poetry-plays to-day, are Ibsen and Chekhov – and Ibsen more in his prose plays than in *Per Gynt*. They are prose dramatists, but their plays (indeed I think this is true of all great plays) are essentially and not accidentally, poetic" (6.516-17).

39. TSE may be taking issue with Walter Pater's dictum in *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1888): "*All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music*" (140).

40. Act II, scene ii

41. Virgil takes his leave from Dante at the threshold of the earthly Paradise in *Purgatorio* XXVII.127-42.

42. TSE explained in the preface, dated Oct 1956, to *OPP*: "I wish that I could have found worthy of inclusion two lectures delivered at Edinburgh University before the War, on 'The Development of Shakespeare's Verse'; for what I was trying to say still seems to me worth saying. But the lectures struck me as badly written, and in need of thorough revision – a task to be deferred to some indefinite future. I regret the omission the less, however, as I had pillaged this set of lectures of one of its best passages – an analysis of the first scene of *Hamlet* – to incorporate in another address, 'Poetry and Drama.' So, having already robbed one lecture for the benefit of another, I now append to 'Poetry and Drama' another brief extract from the same Edinburgh lecture, a note on the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*" (8.225-26). For TSE's analysis of this scene, see "The Development of Shakespeare's Verse. Two Lectures" (5.544-46). He incorporated uncorrected misquotations from the two lectures into *Poetry and Drama*.

43. II.ii.15-17 (Romeo, to Juliet at her balcony window); *read*: "do entreat her eyes"

44. ll.133-35; *read*: "My love as deep; the more I give to thee,"

45. ll. 119-20; *read*: "Too like the lightning," . . . "It lightens."

46†. In *P&D* (US) this is followed by: "On the present occasion there are two strong reasons why this reminder should be more than the ordinary formal tribute. This is the first of the lectures

to be given annually in the name of Theodore Spencer, sometime Boylston Professor of Rhetoric in Harvard University. In the second place,"

47†. In *P&D* (US) this is followed by: "If I speak of him at greater length than is usual on such occasions, I feel sure that you will not only excuse but approve my doing so. There must be many of his friends and former pupils in this audience; much that I shall say of him will therefore be familiar knowledge; but I am sure that an act of homage to his personality, his work, and his influence will be welcome to all of you."

48. Theodore Spencer, a noted scholar of Shakespeare and Elizabethan drama, graduated from Princeton in 1923 and spent the following academic year at Trinity College, Cambridge. He returned to America and received his PhD from Harvard University in 1928, remaining there as a teacher until his death in 1949.

49. TSE was Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard from Oct 1932 to May 1933, residing at Eliot House during his tenure. In the spring of 1933, he delivered a series of lectures to a group of twenty selected students on a course entitled "English 26: English Literature from 1890 to the Present Day" (4.758). As he later recalled in a letter to Thomas Rice Henn of 30 May 1939: "While I was there, I gave a course of lectures on recent English literature, for which he [Theodore Spencer] acted as my assistant. We therefore discussed both the subject matter and treatment of the course itself and the merits of individual students with constant attention."

50. TSE was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by the University of Cambridge on 9 June 1938.

51. TSE wrote a testimonial for Spencer to Cambridge academics Thomas Rice Henn and E. M. W. Tillyard on 30 May 1939. He also "discussed the whole subject with Tillyard and [I. A.] Richards" on 8 June 1939, as he wrote to Spencer the following day. News of Spencer's appointment reached TSE in mid-June, and he wrote to congratulate him on 16 June. Spencer was the first American to be appointed lecturer in English literature at the University of Cambridge.

52†. This sentence is only present in *P&D* (US): "(for only those were left who were unfit for wartime service),"

53†. TSE circled "post" and wrote in the bottom margin "preferment" in his copy of *AM*.

54. Spencer was appointed Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard in 1946.

55. TSE was a guest at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton in Oct and Nov 1948. He saw Spencer for the last time in the first week of Nov and flew to London on 3 Dec. Spencer died on 18 Jan 1949.

56. In 1942, Spencer gave the Lowell lectures on Shakespeare, published as *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* (1943). He also wrote *Death and Elizabethan Tragedy* (1936) and edited a collection of essays, *A Garland for John Donne, 1631-1931* (1931), to which TSE contributed "Donne in our Time" (4.369).

57. Roger B. (Bigelow) Merriman (1876-1945) was the Gurney Professor of History and Political Science at Harvard and master of Eliot House (1931-42). On 1 Mar 1933, he played the part of King Henry V in Thomas Dekker's Elizabethan comedy *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1600). Performed in the house dining hall, it was the first play to be put on in any of the houses. According to the *Harvard Crimson* of 2 Mar 1933, Merriman's appearance on stage was "preceded by a blare of trumpets," and after the last scene, "King Roger and his court paraded through the dining hall, rapidly circled back through the court-yard and made a second triumphal entrance to the stage" (http://www.thecrimson.com/article/1933/3/2/news-from-the-houses-pbefore-a/).

The Spoken Word[1]

Few of those few people in any generation who care for poetry need to be told that poetry must be understood through the ear and not merely taken in by the eye. It is a common experience that a poem found difficult when read to oneself, is suddenly elucidated when read aloud by someone who has understood it. And in Great Britain nowadays there is ample opportunity to learn how poetry should sound. The poetry readings regularly broadcast by the B.B.C., the reproduction of verse by gramophone records, and public recitals of poetry, enable us to familiarise ourselves through the ear with the poetry of the past; and when the reader is a living poet reading his own verse, we can hear modern poetry as nearly as possible as the author hears it. I find, for my own part, that I prefer to read a new poem by a contemporary author before I hear it; but that the hearing of it can send me back to re-read it with fuller understanding. It is thus that the music lover acquaints himself with a new composition: if he has read the score he is better prepared for the first audition; and after he has heard the piece interpreted, he can return to the score with greater understanding.

To say that poetry must be heard is a commonplace. What is perhaps less commonplace is to make the point that the poet is at the same time in a relation of dependence upon, and responsibility towards, the language in which he writes; and that the English language has peculiar resources of enrichment and revitalisation available to its poets. It will be admitted, even in our time, that some languages are "greater" than others; but that among the "great" languages there is diversity of gifts, such that one language may be more expressive for some purposes and another language for some other purposes; and that therefore we cannot say of two languages, such as English and French, that one is "greater" than the other. But the English language has, as I have just said, certain peculiar advantages for the poet; and the English poets, by availing themselves of these advantages, have played, and should continue to play, a most important part in the development and renovation of the language.

English owes a great deal, in the first place, to her ballads. We think first of the "border ballads" – those which were composed, during a certain period of time, in the closely related speech of the people living on both sides of

the frontier between England and Scotland. At the stage of what is called (having regard to its anonymity of authorship) "folk poetry" the language of verse and the language of common speech are almost identical – and both are nearer to song than in more highly developed stages of language. But we must remember that the development from folk poetry to more sophisticated poetry is not in a simple way chronological. Behind the language of the border ballads is the Anglo-Saxon language, which at the end of the Norman conquest had arrived at such a point of sophistication that the practice of verse was an art of exacting rules. On the other hand, the popular ballad, in town and country, was a living form up to the twentieth century, and preserved the relation between poetry and common speech. Samuel Johnson, commonly regarded as a representative of the period of the most artificial verse, expressed in strong terms his admiration for the *Ballad of Johnny Armstrong*.[2]

In the history of English poetry we can observe two alternating and almost periodic movements. One is towards elaboration, the other a reaction towards simplification. In the first phase, poets refine, complicate, achieve the more subtle or the more decorative; they tend to borrow words and idioms from Latin and Greek and from other more highly developed modern languages. They depart from the common speech of their day. This is naturally the first in time, because it happens first when the language is still in the awkward age, when poets recognise the crudity of their language compared to those of the ancients or to that of some contemporary people. The reverse, the return to simplicity – or rather, the conscious effort towards simplification – occurs later, because it springs from a more sophisticated consciousness. Poets try to return to common speech: not, of course, to the common speech of earlier times, because that is already obsolete and quaint, but to a common speech contemporary with themselves, a speech which has undergone many changes. In the history of these changes of language, Geoffrey Chaucer occupies a unique position. For he enriched and exercised the English language by his study of French models, at a time when the French language was more advanced than the English; yet he also listened to the homely talk of his own people, so that in spite of his innovations we hear in his poetry the voice of a cultivated English gentleman of his day, speaking not only to courtiers but to all his fellow-countrymen.

After Chaucer there was little development until the sixteenth century. The impact of the Renaissance upon England brought about a more widespread and enthusiastic study of the classics, and especially of the

pre-Christian Latin writers. Prose writing became heavily latinised, and many new words were coined out of Latin metal. New words were very much needed, if English civilisation was to catch up with that of France and Italy; out of the new currency of words some have proved valueless and sound pedantic and uncouth to modern ears; others have become part of the small change of our everyday transactions. At the same time, in the sixteenth and well into the seventeenth century, the influence of the Italian poetry of the Renaissance was very strong. A revolution took place in English prosody. Then were shaped the verse forms – on Latin, Italian and French models – which are now called "traditional English verse." What is now called "modern verse" is partly a return to older forms of English versification – to the stress, to "sprung rhythm,"[3] to alliteration – the apparent irregularity and lawlessness of which is due to its being based on the musical bar instead of the foot, and to its refusal to admit that some syllables of the English language are *always* long and others *always* short, instead of their being longer or shorter according to their position.

The man who brought order out of the innovations and borrowings of the sixteenth century – a great innovator himself, and with a sensitiveness to words almost equal to that of Chaucer – was Edmund Spenser. He was an elaborator, and he elaborated to excess. If his influence was immensely for good, instead of leading merely to further excesses ending in decadence, it was, I think, because of what appears to have been a happy accident. The great poets who underwent and transmitted his teaching, happened to be dramatic poets. First of his disciples was Christopher Marlowe. A dramatic poet, a poet who is writing for the theatre, who is dependent for his livelihood upon immediate success with a popular audience, cannot afford to depart too far from common speech. In the work of Marlowe, as in the work of Shakespeare (who owed much to his precocious contemporary), we can observe that as they became more experienced in the theatre their characters speak more naturally – and that the *poetry* gains, in concentration, in economy, in force and in intensity, in the process. The disciplinary value of the theatre, not for poetic drama only, but for the whole of English poetry during the last three hundred years, has not received its due attention.

The non-dramatic poetry at the turn of the sixteenth century might, however, have gone the way of Euphism,[4] becoming more and more alienated from common speech, but for the appearance of John Donne. It was he who taught lyric verse to speak again with a tone and in an idiom of polite conversation. On the other hand, his verse owes much to his living in an age in

which lyric poetry was closely allied to music, the age in which Thomas Campion wrote both the words and the music of his songs. But the naturalness of the style of Donne contained the seeds of a new artificiality. After him George Herbert, and less steadily, Thomas Vaughan, write in a natural style; but after them, the lyrical tradition becomes more and more artificial in the work of poets – of genuine talent – such as Cleveland, Benlowes and Cowley. The return to common speech is chiefly associated with the name of John Dryden. Not only in his satirical and polemical poems, but also in his rhymed heroic drama, we hear the tones of the speech of good society in his time. And the same tones are heard a generation later in the incomparable octosyllabic couplets of Swift.

I shall not attempt to follow in detail the history of the swing of the pendulum between elaboration and simplification, between the artificial and the natural. The next great revolution was that initiated by Wordsworth, in a revolt against the debased style of the eighteenth century imitators of Spenser, Milton, and Pope. In the *Preface* to his early poems – a poetic manifesto of great importance – he affirmed the poetic potentiality of the speech of common people.[5] The history of English poetry through the nineteenth century can be viewed as an elaboration of the idiom used by Wordsworth and his contemporaries. There are partial exceptions, notably in the poetry of Browning, whose weakness was that in his attempt to find a more conversational style he tended to lapse into a style peculiar to Browning himself; and in a few single poems or lines by lesser men, such as Ernest Dowson and John Davidson.

The effort of the first half of the twentieth century has been towards another revolution, towards finding a new idiom by exploring the poetic possibilities of the speech of our own time. It has been a revolt against the poetic diction, and also against the limited subject matter, of the "Victorians." I have no doubt that the idiom and versification which we now call "modern" contain, like those of every previous period, the seeds of a new artificiality, and will end in verse as remote from the speech of its time as that of any earlier period of decline; but – if we continue to produce poets – I have also no doubt that the resources of the English language will be adequate for a new revolution.

The English language has had two great advantages which lead one to believe that it will continue to hold its own in literature. One is the complexity of its formation, the strands of different languages – each introducing different poetic rhythms – out of which it is woven. The other is the

fact that so many of its poets have had (and still have) the ambition to write for the theatre. That most of them have had but little, or only ephemeral success on the stage, and that their plays are among the least read parts of their work, is irrelevant to this point. Addison, Johnson, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson and Browning, Swinburne and Matthew Arnold, all wrote plays which have never been and never will be successful in the theatre.[6] But a poet who has tried to write for the stage, even one who has merely cherished the desire to do so, has before his eyes this criterion of writing; that poetry must be written to be spoken, that it must be capable of being spoken by other voices than that of the author, that it must *hold the attention* of those who hear it, and that it must not be written in a language remote from that which its contemporary audience speaks.

NOTES

1. As printed in *Festival of Britain 1951: London Season of the Arts*. London and Bradford: Lund Humphries & Co., 1951. Pp. 96; 6-9. Official souvenir program published for the Arts Council of Great Britain in the last week of Apr 1951.

The Festival of Britain was a national exhibition held in the summer of 1951, organized by the government to celebrate the recovery after the war and to promote the British contribution to technology, science, and the arts. On 30 June 1950, Duncan Guthrie of the Arts Council wrote to confirm TSE's agreement, "through the good offices of Mr. John Hayward," to write for them "an article of some 750 words on The Spoken Word and that you will treat this subject particularly in relation to Spoken Poetry and Poetic Drama." TSE, who served on the Festival Advisory Council from Feb 1950, sent his article to the Arts Council on 16 Oct, for which he received twenty-five guineas. In a letter dated "Michaelmas 1951" [29 Sept], TSE wrote to Polly Tandy: "On my birthday evening [26 Sept] I paid my first last and only visit to the Festival of Britain Exhibition."

2. "Johnny Armstrong" forms part of the Child Ballads (number 169), a collection of 305 English and Scottish ballads compiled by Francis James Child in the five-volume *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-98). It recounts the story of the popular Scottish robber Johnnie Armstrong of Gilnockie who was caught and executed in 1530. When discussing Thomas Gray's poem "The Bard," Samuel Johnson praised its "abrupt breaking off and plunging into the subject all at once" by tracing its origin to the ballad of "Johnny Armstrong": "Of the first stanza the abrupt beginning has been celebrated; but technical beauties can give praise only to the inventor. It is in the power of any man to rush abruptly upon his subject that has read the ballad of *Johnny Armstrong*, / *Is there ever a man in all Scotland* – // The initial resemblances, or alliterations, 'ruin, ruthless,' 'helm or hauberk,' are below the grandeur of a poem that endeavours at sublimity" ("Thomas Gray," in *Lives*, 501).

3. Sprung rhythm (OED): "a term coined by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89) for a poetic metre used by him which approximates to the rhythm of speech and in which each foot consists of one stressed syllable either alone or followed by a varying number of unstressed syllables."

4. Incorrect spelling of "euphuism" (OED): "the name of a certain type of diction and style which originated in the imitation of Lyly's *Euphues*, and which was fashionable in literature and

in the conversation of cultivated society at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th c. Hence applied to any similar kind of affectation in writing or speech, and (loosely) to affectedly periphrastic or 'high-flown' language in general." TSE devoted a unit of his 1918 course in Modern English Literature to the style and influence of John Lyly's *Euphues* (1.755).

5. In the preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth explained that "the principal object then which I proposed to myself in these Poems was to make the incidents of common life interesting . . . The language too of these men is adopted . . . because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because . . . they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions." *Lyrical Ballads, with Other Poems*, vol 1 (London: T. N. Longman and O. Rees, 1800), x, xi-xii.

6. In "Poetry and Drama," delivered on 21 Nov 1950, TSE explained "that the primary failure of nineteenth-century poets when they wrote for the theatre (and most of the greatest English poets had tried their hand at drama) was not in their theatrical technique, but in their dramatic language; and that this was due largely to their limitation to a strict blank verse which, after extensive use for non-dramatic poetry, had lost the flexibility which blank verse must have if it is to give the effect of conversation" (7.596).

Speech to the Fédération britannique des comités de l'Alliance française

TSE delivered this speech to the Assemblée générale at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, on 2 June 1951, under the presidency of the Earl De La Warr. He was invited to speak as vice president of the Conseil of the Fédération by the chairman, Secrétaire général Claude Chailley; his fellow speakers included the French ambassador, René Massigli, and the president of the Alliance française, Émile Henriot.

Mr. Chairman,
Monsieur l'Ambassadeur
Monsieur le Président de l'Alliance Française,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am not aware, particularly on this day, of any justification for my being called upon to make a speech, or of any qualifications for doing so on this occasion which would not have been exhibited more adequately by the other speakers. However, I was asked to say something and I was given no directives as to what to talk about. That is left entirely to my own fancy and resourcefulness. This afternoon will be given to practical business matters and I shall have to introduce the report of your "sous-Comité Culturel";[1] it is therefore suitable this morning, if I am to speak at all, to make a few observations and general reflections about the value and place of the Fédération of the Alliance Française in contemporary civilisation.[2]

We have all had constantly before our minds, during the last few years, the problem of European unity and co-operation. Various schemes have been advanced by theorists; several modes of organisation are already in being and going through those stages of struggle inevitable when men's minds and habits have to be re-adjusted on a large scale to new situations. With these I am not concerned, but rather with the parallel movement in what is called – I do not like the term very much, but we have to call it something – the cultural field, and with the enhanced consciousness of the importance of all those relations between peoples with which politicians and statesmen are not directly concerned. In particular, more people have begun to be aware of Western Europe as one community and, more dimly, of the need to relate our ideas of the conscious unity which we desire, to deeper feelings of

cultural kinship which struggle against equally rooted habits of local feeling and behaviour. Again, I shall not here allow myself, in consideration of the various questions in which I am personally interested, to talk about those organisations which have been formed for developing the consciousness of the fundamental identities of culture between, in particular, the peoples of Europe as a whole. I only want to touch here upon two conditions which seem to me necessary to keep in mind for the realisation of unity between France and England.

The first is, simply, that to be a "good European"[3] does not seem to me to require any diminution of local and national loyalties or, on the part of any people and language, of any abatement of self-esteem.[4] It seems to me on the whole a very good thing that each people, in a family of nations such as that of Western Europe, should regard itself as in some respect superior to all the others. This makes for good and even affectionate relations. To be able to regard oneself as superior in some respect to somebody else makes it easier to get on with them. I say "in some respect," for the effect of close relations with another culture ought to be to make one more critical of one's own, more conscious of it in such a way as to see more clearly its defects and weaknesses as well as its merits and strength.

My second point is, to my mind, a corollary of the first. It is that our aims for European unity, on the "cultural" plane, must come to terms with the fact that each culture is more closely related to, and more dependent upon, some European cultures than others; and that one nation may have a closer affinity with one foreign nation in one respect and with another in another. In short, it is not only not true that to be a good European it is necessary to be less an Englishman, or a Frenchman, or any other nationality; it is also not true that to be a good European one must have an equal and impartial affection for every other European country. There is always a danger that some enthusiastic supporters may envisage European culture as something which could be completely unified, which should obliterate regional and national differences: and that could only lead to a condition in which we should have nothing to gain from each other. For if the native of the shore of the Mediterranean was identical with the native of the shore of the North Sea in thought, sensibility and behaviour, there would be no longer any point in either one crossing Europe to meet the other. They might both just as well stop at home and talk to their next door neighbour.

The point to which I am leading is a very simple and obvious one. It is, that however desirable it is that we should be Europeans as well as Englishmen,

we do not want to become abstract Europeans; and that however desirable it is that we should cultivate a closer understanding with all peoples of Europe, it is none the less necessary – no, I should say, all the more necessary – that we should tie more closely our relations with those countries with whose cultures we have already the strongest and most inveterate sympathy. The closest bond of England is surely with France. And I would say that the peculiar admiration and respect for French culture which most educated British people feel, has always done a great deal to facilitate their understanding of the other Latin cultures. (Whether an understanding of English culture has provided for our French friends a similar channel of understanding of Scandinavia, I do not know). We have, in any case, to strengthen the bonds which exist, without which the development of wider ties can hardly take place.

Thus, I think of such work as that done by the Fédération Britannique des Comités de l'Alliance Française as an important contribution to that unity of Europe which, whatever our several reservations about ways and means, we all earnestly desire. I must add, however, that we should not serve this larger cause by making it a conscious aim. We can only help to bring this about as a by-product: it will be served only by our attending to our own work. For we must remember that in the cultural field the element of conscious aim has only a limited, though necessary, place. We believe that our activity in the Alliance Française affirms the bonds between the two countries, and that belief is a stimulus to persevere. But if people joined the Fédération – or rather joined one of the affiliated Circles – merely because they had a strong social conscience, merely because they believed that by acquiring a knowledge and understanding of French culture they were doing a good thing, the whole affair would be dead as mutton. People join the Fédération because they love France, or because they have a curiosity about France; because they like to hear French well spoken, because they want to meet French people, because they want to mix with other English people who feel a similar interest and love and enthusiasm for the French language and all it represents. One does this primarily for one's own profit and enjoyment; and unless one had one's own personal – and, if you like, selfish – reasons, the spirit of the thing would die and leave something mechanical and lifeless. It is worth while reminding oneself, from time to time, that cultural interests must be pursued primarily for their own sake, and not because of the benefits to society which may ensue from them. But on the other hand, we need to feel also that they have some larger justification, so

that they shall not be merely self-centred; and therefore – I have spoken simply to press this point – that any Circle of the Alliance Française is indirectly giving as well as receiving benefits by contributing to the affirmation of the ties between the two countries; and that in doing this it is contributing, though more indirectly, to the restoration and strengthening of Europe as a whole.

NOTES

1. As vice president of the Conseil, TSE gave periodic reports to the "Cultural Sub-Committee," of which he was appointed chair in May 1948.

2. Founded in Paris in 1883, the main objective of the Alliance française is to promote French language and culture abroad.

3. Possibly an allusion to Nietzsche's "wir *guten Europäer*" in the preface to *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886): "But we, who are neither Jesuits, nor democrats, nor even sufficiently Germans, we *good Europeans*, are free, *very* free spirits – we have it still, all the distress of spirit and all the tension of its bow!" *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Helen Zimmern (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 3.

4. As early as 1924, TSE asserted: "if anyone has a genuine nationality, let him assert it, let the Frenchman be as French, the Englishman as English, the German as German, as he can be; but let him be French or English or German in such a way that his national character will complement, not contradict, the other nationalities" (2.500).

TEXTUAL NOTE

Printed with the proceedings distributed to members, *Assemblée générale du samedi 2 juin 1951* (12-14). A copy duplicated by cyclostyle is in the Hayward Bequest (P39d), King's College.

Preface to *Murder in the Cathedral: A Screenplay*, by T. S. Eliot

London: The Westminster Press, 1951. Pp. 16; Preface, 2.[1]

This is, I believe, the first attempt that has been made to adapt a modern verse play to the screen. It was, at any rate, an experiment both from the point of view of the producer and that of the author of the text. The question of the suitability of poetry in the cinema is one I leave to others to answer. My own curiosity extended primarily to the question of the suitability of the cinema for poetry. The designing of a film in which the visual element must support the words, without distracting attention from them, without subordinating words to pictures, and without imposing upon the spectator a double effort of attention, presents new problems for the producer. That these problems have been solved, I judge from my own satisfaction in the result. Contrary to my apprehensions, I find that my words gain, rather than lose, by this presentation.

There is first the obvious advantage of clarity. In the film, every word can be audible to every member of the audience. The advantages are still more evident in dialogue than in monologue, and yet more apparent in the choral passages. And when the eye is, at every moment, made to fix itself on the particular aspect of the scene that will best correspond to the words that are spoken, the advantages for interpretation are very great.

Such an experiment, to be wholly successful, demands close co-operation between the creator of the film and the author of the verse to be spoken. I hope that this film may have the result of attracting poets to the possibilities of the film, and of persuading film directors to turn their attention to the possibilities of poetry. For the benefit of the poets, I should like to add one admonition as a result of my experience during the creation of the film of *Murder in the Cathedral*: that even if they have already had some practice in writing for the theatre, they will have a great deal to learn about another art; and that the cinema has its own laws which are not those of the stage.

NOTES

1. Published on 28 July 1951 for distribution gratis in Venice in connection with the first showing of the film at the International Film Festival on 2 Sept, directed and produced by TSE's

collaborator on the film, the Austrian director George Hoellering (1897-1980), with music by László Lajtha and cinematography by David Kosky. "I am not going to Venice," TSE wrote to Djuna Barnes on 22 Aug, "because I am going to Switzerland, but I have seen the film, and I think it is very good. The photography and the music are first rate, and in some respects, I think it an improvement on the play." He wrote to Edith Perkins on 25 Aug that he found the music written for the film "very interesting indeed, and the voices come out wonderfully – one hears every word much more clearly than on the stage."

TSE's "Preface," together with the "Synopsis" of the play, were reprinted in the program, titled *T. S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral*, for distribution at showings of the film in England and in the United States. The scenario of the film is printed in *The Film of Murder in the Cathedral*, by T. S. Eliot and George Hoellering (London: Faber, 1952), which includes TSE's preface (7.717).

Norman Nicholson's "Notes on the Way"

To the Editor of *Time and Tide*

Time and Tide, 32 (4 Aug 1951) 746

Sir, – In his "Notes on the Way," Mr Norman Nicholson speaks of Charles Williams in the context of Wordsworth and the "Way of Nature."[1] It may interest some of your readers to know that Williams had thought of *The Figure of Beatrice* as the first volume of a kind of trilogy. The second volume, of which his draft of the first chapters has been published, was to be *The Figure of Arthur*.[2] The third, to which no title had been given, was to be concerned with Wordsworth. There was even some question in his mind whether to adopt Arthur or Wordsworth in immediate succession to Beatrice. His sudden death deprived us of both these books. Mr Nicholson, if anyone, could help to console us for the loss of the third.[3]

I am, etc.,
T. S. ELIOT

Faber and Faber Limited,
24 Russell Square, London, WC1

NOTES

1. Norman Nicholson stated in the issue of 21 July 1951: "Mention of St Herbert and the Lakes brings us to Wordsworth and it was Wordsworth in whom Williams found the clearest and most shining revelation of the Way of Nature, just as he found in Dante the revelation of the Way of the Church-State and the Way of Human Love. He defined and analysed the two latter in book after book, and especially in *The Figure of Beatrice*, but he left the Way of Nature comparatively unexplored and, to see what he meant, we have to turn direct to Wordsworth" (697). The second and last part of Nicholson's "Notes on the Way" ends thus: "Wordsworth taught us the holiness of the way; Charles Williams taught us its significance. It is up to us now to establish the landmarks, to map out the road and get moving" (*Time and Tide*, 28 July 1951, 719).

2. In "The Significance of Charles Williams" (1946), TSE described *The Figure of Beatrice* (1943) as "at once a good introduction to Dante and to the thought of Charles Williams" (6.773). He remarked earlier in the same essay that in his "later and best poems" Williams "expects a good deal of the reader. Not many of us know intimately the legends of King Arthur, which always fascinated him, on which they are based" (6.772). Williams's *Arthurian Torso, Containing the Posthumous Fragment of the Figure of Arthur* appeared in 1948.

3. Nicholson, whose first volume of poems *Five Rivers* was published by Faber in 1944, had recently published the collection *Wordsworth: An Introduction and a Selection* (1949).

The Unity of European Culture[1]

A message to the Nouvelles équipes internationales conference

Six years ago, I outlined my ideas on the subject of the unity of European culture in a series of broadcast talks, subsequently printed.[2] Though addressed to the German public, the subject made them relevant to the situation of the whole of Western Europe. My views have not changed. I do not wish to repeat what I have already said. [. . .][3†] Nevertheless, I offer one or two observations as testimony of good-will.

On the one hand, I distinguish sharply between the field of action with which [. . .] we are concerned [at this NEI congress] and that of political action.[4†] The primary concern of political leaders must be the immediate future. They must defer to popular feeling, yield to circumstance, and take advantage of expedients. Their decisions must often be taken in the light of considerations of which most of us remain in ignorance. They take the form of pacts and plans which can be judged only by experts and by results. Politicians must appeal to obvious and pressing interests, and often to the desire to avoid misfortune rather than to enthusiasm for a more distant goal.

Those who concern themselves with the cultural unity of Europe do not aim at the return to some earlier phase of society before the appearance of nations – or to restore the Holy Roman Empire. Nor do they wish to fabricate a new unity by a complete break with the past and the present. They wish rather to bring to light, to make patent to the eyes of more and more people, what we inherit and hold in common, the culture which we still share.[5†] It is necessary to distinguish our task clearly from that of the politicians and the leaders[6†] and representatives of governments. Otherwise, we risk the loss of our own ideals. Ours is a long-term struggle towards a distant goal which cannot be, and should not be, too clearly visualised.

Nevertheless, our work is concerned, so to speak, with the cultivation of the soil out of which the political ideas of the future must grow. How to conserve and nourish the spiritual life of Europe, how to cultivate in each region and amongst those of each race and language, the sense of a *vocation* in relation to each other. So that the glory of each people should be measured, not in material power and wealth, but by its contribution to the

spiritual well-being of all the others. We do not aim merely to persuade people to accept a policy, or to pay lip-service to some magnificent[7†] verbal creed, but to awaken their consciousness and their conscience.[8†]

NOTES

1. As printed in *Transnationale Parteienkooperation der europäischen Christdemokraten: Dokumente 1945-1965*, eds. Michael Gehler and Wolfram Kaiser. Munich: K. G. Saur, 2004. Pp. 728; 289.

TSE drafted this message while on holiday alone at the Hôtel Belle-Vue, Chardonne sur Vevey, Switzerland. It was written for delivery by proxy at the fourth Nouvelles équipes internationales (NEI) conference held at Bad Ems in Germany, 14-16 Sept 1951. Founded in June 1947 on Christian social democratic principles, the Nouvelles équipes internationales (New International Teams) advocated European integration as the best way to safeguard Western European Christian values in the face of the communist threat during the Cold War. The organization was renamed Union européenne des démocrates-chrétiens (European Union of Christian Democrats) in 1965. On 11 Sept, TSE sent a copy of the message to the Belgian politician A. E. de Schryver (1898-1991), chairman of the NEI, and subsequently to Philip Mairet, editor of *The Frontier: A Christian Commentary on the Common Life*. Mairet published all but the introductory paragraph in a section of his editorial commentary, "INTERIM," subtitled "Eliot on European Unity," in the issue of Jan 1952 (13-14). He referred briefly to the introduction in his prefatory remarks: "After observing that he did not want to add to what he had said in his broadcast talks to Germany on the general question of *The Unity of European Culture*, Mr. Eliot offered the following observations 'as testimony of goodwill:'" (14). A. E. de Schryver preserved TSE's text as "Dokument 84" in the NEI files, subsequently printed in *Transnationale Parteienkooperation der europäischen Christdemokraten* (2004) with bracketed ellipses and a bracketed insertion.

On 23 Jan 1952, TSE wrote to Stephen Spender, who had requested a manuscript for a Red Cross sale in support of the Save the Children Fund: "I have discovered by accident, a fragmentary manuscript, which I enclose as a small offering towards the salvation of your children. It is merely the draft of a message which I had to send this last summer, at short notice, to a cultural congress at Bad Ems. On the other hand, it must be almost unique in its length as a specimen of my handwriting, for the reason that I was in Switzerland without a typewriter" (Beinecke). The three-page holograph manuscript, in pencil with revisions, was written on ruled paper and entitled: "Draft: The Unity of European Culture"; it was signed and dated "T. S. Eliot / Vevey. Sept. 1951" (Beinecke). The manuscript was purchased by Donald Gallup for his personal collection, as he reported in *Pigeons on the Granite: Memories of a Yale Librarian* (New Haven: Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, 1988), 114.

2. *Die Einheit der europäischen Kultur* (1946) (6.709)

3†. The bracketed ellipsis removes a statement which read in the manuscript draft: "and to develop their implications and qualifications to the degree necessary for a worthy contribution to this occasion would have required much more time and meditation than I was able, in my circumstances of this summer, to devote."

4†. In *Frontier*: "between the field of action with which, as I understand the terms of reference, we are concerned, and that of political action."

5†. In *Frontier*, a paragraph break occurs here.

6†. In *Frontier*: "heads"

7†. In *Frontier*: "magniloquent"

8†. The concluding sentence in TSE's draft, indented as a new paragraph, was omitted in the *Frontier* and NEI texts: "The politician must accept the situation as he finds it."

Virgil and the Christian World[1]

The esteem in which Virgil has been held throughout Christian history may easily be made to appear, in a historical account of it, largely due to accidents, irrelevances, misunderstandings and superstitions.[2†] Such an account can tell you why Virgil's poems were prized so highly; but it may not give you any reason to infer that he deserved so high a place; still less might it persuade you that his work has any value for the world to-day or to-morrow or forever. What interests me here[3†] are those characteristics of Virgil which render him peculiarly sympathetic to the Christian mind. To assert this is not to accord him any exaggerated value as a poet, or even as a moralist, above that of all other poets Greek or Roman.[4†]

There is however one "accident," or "misunderstanding," which has played such a part in history that to ignore it would appear an evasion. This is of course the fourth *Eclogue*, in which Virgil, on the occasion of the birth or the expectation of a son to his friend Pollio, recently named consul, speaks in highflown language in what purports to be[5†] a mere letter of congratulation to the happy father.[6]

> Now is come the last age of the song of Cumae; the great line of the centuries begins anew. Now the Virgin returns, the reign of Saturn returns . . .
>
> He shall have the gift of divine life, shall see heroes mingled with gods, and shall himself be seen of them, and shall sway a world to which his father's virtues have brought peace . . .
>
> The serpent, too, shall perish, and the false poison-plant shall perish; Assyrian spice shall spring up on every soil . . .[7]

Such phrases have always seemed excessive, and the child who was the subject of them never cut any great figure in the world. It has even been suggested that Virgil was pulling his friend's leg by this oriental hyperbole. Some scholars have thought that he was imitating, or taking off, the style of the Sibylline oracles. Some have conjectured that the poem is covertly addressed to Octavius,[8†] or even that it concerns the offspring of Antony and Cleopatra. A French scholar, Carcopino, gives good reason to believe that the poem contains allusions to Pythagorean doctrine.[9] The mystery of the poem does

not seem to have attracted any particular attention[10†] until the Christian Fathers got hold of it. The Virgin, the Golden Age, the Great Year, the parallel with the prophecies of Isaiah;[11] the child *cara deum suboles* – "dear offspring of the gods, great scion of Jupiter"[12] – could only be the Christ himself, whose coming was foreseen by Virgil in the year 40 B.C. Lactantius and St. Augustine believed this; so did the entire mediaeval Church and Dante; and even perhaps, in his own fashion, Victor Hugo.[13]

It is possible that still other explanations may be found, and we already know more about the probabilities than the Christian Fathers did. We also know that Virgil, who was a man of great learning in his time, and, as Mr. Jackson Knight has shown us, well informed in matters of folklore and antiquities, had at least indirect acquaintance with the religions[14†] and with the figurative language of the East.[15] That would be sufficient in itself to account for any suggestion of Hebrew prophecy. Whether we consider the prediction of the Incarnation merely a coincidence will depend on what we mean by coincidence; whether we consider Virgil a Christian prophet will depend upon our interpretation of the word "prophecy." That Virgil himself was consciously concerned only with domestic affairs or with Roman politics I feel sure: I think that he would have been very much astonished by the career which his fourth *Eclogue* was to have. If a prophet were by definition a man who understood the full meaning of what he was saying, this would be for me the end of the matter. But if the word "inspiration" is to have any meaning, it must mean just this, that the speaker or writer is uttering something which he does not wholly understand – or which he may even misinterpret when the inspiration has departed from him. This is certainly true of poetic inspiration: and there is more obvious[16†] reason for admiring Isaiah as a poet than for claiming Virgil as a prophet.[17†] A poet may believe that he is expressing only his private experience; his lines may be for him only a means of talking about himself without giving himself away; yet for his readers what he has written may come to be the expression both of their own secret feelings and of the exultation or despair of a generation. He need not know what his poetry will come to mean to others; and a prophet need not understand the meaning of his prophetic utterance.[18†]

We have a mental habit which makes it much easier for us to explain the miraculous in natural terms than to explain the natural in miraculous terms: yet the latter is as necessary as the former. A miracle which everybody accepted and believed in with no difficulty would be a strange miracle indeed; because what was miraculous for everybody would also seem natural

to everybody. It seems to me that one can accept whatever explanation of the fourth *Eclogue*, by a scholar and historian, is the most plausible; because the scholars and historians can only be concerned with what Virgil *thought* he was doing. But, at the same time, if there is such a thing as inspiration – and we do go on using the word – then it is something which escapes historical research.

I have had to consider the fourth *Eclogue*, because it is so important in speaking of the history[19†] of Virgil's place in the Christian tradition that to avoid mention of it might lead to misunderstanding. And it is hardly possible to speak of it without indicating in what way one accepts, or rejects, the view that it prophesies the coming of Christ. I wanted only to make clear that the literal acceptance of this *Eclogue* as prophecy had much to do with the early admission of Virgil as suitable reading for Christians, and therefore opened the way for his influence in the Christian world. I do not regard this as simply an accident, or a mere curiosity of literature. But what really concerns me is the element in Virgil which gives him a significant, a unique place, at the end of the pre-Christian and at the beginning of the Christian world. He looks both ways; he makes a liaison between the old world and the new, and of his peculiar position[20†] we may take the fourth *Eclogue* as a symbol. In what respects, therefore, does the greatest of Roman poets anticipate the Christian world in a way in which the Greek poets do not? This question has been best answered by the late Theodor Haecker, in a book, published some years ago in an English translation under the title *Virgil the Father of the West*.[21†] I shall make use of Haecker's method.[22]

Here I shall make a slight and perhaps trivial diversion. When I was a schoolboy, it was my lot to be introduced to the *Iliad* and to the *Aeneid* in the same year. I had, up to that point, found the Greek language a much more exciting study than Latin. I still think it a much greater language: a language which has never been surpassed[23†] as a vehicle for the fullest range and the finest shades of thought and feeling. Yet I found myself at ease with Virgil as I was not at ease with Homer. It might have been rather different if we had started with the *Odyssey* instead of the *Iliad*; for when we came to read certain selected books of the *Odyssey* – and I have never read more of the *Odyssey* in Greek than those selected books – I was much happier.[24] My preference certainly did not, I am glad to say, mean that I thought Virgil the greater poet. That is the kind of error from which we are preserved in youth, simply because we are too natural to ask such an artificial question – artificial because, in whatever ways Virgil followed the procedure of

Homer, he was not trying to do the same thing. One might just as reasonably try to rate the comparative "greatness" of the *Odyssey* and James Joyce's *Ulysses*, simply because Joyce for quite different purposes used the framework of the *Odyssey*. The obstacle to my enjoyment of the *Iliad*, at that age, was the behaviour of the people Homer wrote about. The gods were as irresponsible, as much a prey to their passions, as devoid of public spirit and the sense of fair play, as the heroes. This was shocking. Furthermore, their sense of humour extended only to the crudest form of horseplay. Achilles was a ruffian; the only hero who could be commended for either conduct or judgment was Hector; and it seemed to me that this was Shakespeare's view also:

> If Helen then be wife to Sparta's King,
> As it is known she is, these moral laws
> Of nature and of nations speak aloud
> To have her back returned . . .[25]

All this may seem to have been simply the caprice of a priggish little boy. I have modified my early opinions – the explanation I should now give is simply that I instinctively preferred the *world* of Virgil to the *world* of Homer – because it was a more civilized world of dignity, reason and order.[26] When I say "the world of Virgil," I mean what Virgil himself made of the world in which he lived. The Rome of the imperial era was coarse and beastly enough; in important respects far less civilized than Athens at its greatest. The Romans were less gifted than the Athenians for the arts, philosophy and pure science; and their language was more obdurate to the expression of either poetry or abstract thought. Virgil made of Roman civilization in his poetry something better than it really was. His sensibility is more nearly Christian than that of any other Roman or Greek poet: not like that of an early Christian perhaps, but like that of Christianity from the time at which we can say that a Christian civilization had come into being. We cannot compare Homer and Virgil; but we can compare the civilization which Homer accepted[27†] with the civilization of Rome as refined by the sensibility of Virgil.

What, then, are the chief characteristics of Virgil which make him sympathetic to the Christian mind? I think that the most promising way of giving some indication briefly, is to follow the procedure of Haecker and try to develop the significance of certain key words. Such words are *labor*, *pietas*, and *fatum*.[28] The *Georgics* are, I think, essential to an understanding of

Virgil's philosophy – using the word with the distinction that we do not mean quite the same thing when we speak of the philosophy of a poet, as[29†] when we speak of the philosophy of an abstract thinker. The *Georgics*, as a technical treatise on farming, are both difficult and dull. Most of us have neither the command of Latin necessary to read them with pleasure, nor any desire to remind ourselves of schooltime agonies. I shall only recommend them in the translation of Mr. Day Lewis who has put them into modern verse.[30†] But they are a work to which their author devoted time, toil and genius. Why did he write them? It is not to be supposed that he was endeavouring to teach their business to the farmers of his native soil; or that he aimed simply to provide a useful handbook for townsmen eager to buy land and launch out as farmers. Nor is it likely that he was merely anxious to compile records, for the curiosity of later generations, of the methods of agriculture in his time. It is more likely that he hoped to remind absentee land owners, careless of their responsibilities and drawn by love of pleasure or love of politics to the metropolis, of the fundamental duty[31†] to cherish the land. Whatever his conscious motive, it seems clear to me that Virgil desired to affirm the dignity of agricultural labour, and the importance of good cultivation of the soil for the well-being of the state both materially and spiritually.

The fact that every major poetic form employed by Virgil has some precedent in Greek verse, must not be allowed to obscure the originality with which he recreated every form he used. There is I think no precedent for the *spirit* of the *Georgics*; and the attitude towards the soil, and the labour of the soil, which is there expressed, is something that we ought to find particularly intelligible now, when urban agglomeration, the flight from the land, the pillage of the earth and the squandering of natural resources are beginning to attract attention. It was the Greeks who taught us the dignity of leisure; it is from them that we inherit the perception that the highest life is the life of contemplation.[32] But this respect for leisure, with the Greeks, was accompanied by a contempt for the banausic occupations. Virgil perceived that agriculture is fundamental to civilization, and he affirmed the dignity of manual labour. When the Christian monastic orders came into being, the contemplative life and the life of manual labour were first conjoined. These were no longer occupations for different classes of people, the one noble,[33†] the other inferior and suitable only for slaves or almost slaves. There was a great deal in the mediaeval world which was not Christian; and practice in the lay world was very different from that of the religious orders

at their best: but at least Christianity did establish the principle that action and contemplation, labour and prayer, are both essential to the life of the complete man. It is possible that the insight of Virgil was recognized by monks who read his works in their religious houses.

Furthermore, we need to keep this affirmation of the *Georgics* in mind when we read the *Aeneid*. There, Virgil is concerned with the *imperium romanum*, with the extension and justification of imperial rule. He set an ideal for Rome, and for empire in general, which was never realized in history; but the ideal of empire as Virgil sees it is a noble one. His devotion to Rome was founded on devotion to the land; to the particular region, to the particular village, and to the family in the village. To the reader of history this foundation of the general on the particular may seem chimerical; just as the union of the contemplative and the active life may seem to most people chimerical. For mostly these aims are envisaged as alternatives: we exalt the contemplative life, and disparage the active, or we exalt the active, and regard the contemplative with amused contempt if not with moral disapproval. And yet it may be the man who affirms the apparently incompatible who is right.[34†]

We come to the second word. It is a commonplace that the word *piety* is only a reduced, altered and specialized translation of *pietas*. We use it in two senses: in general, it suggests devout church-going, or at least church-going with the appearance of devoutness. In another sense, it is always preceded by the adjective "filial," meaning correct behaviour towards a parent. When Virgil speaks, as he does, of *pius Aeneas*,[35] we are apt to think of his care of his father, of his devotion to his father's memory, and of his touching encounter with his father on his descent into the nether regions.[36] But the word *pietas* with Virgil has much wider associations of meaning: it implies an attitude towards the individual, towards the family, towards the region, and towards the imperial destiny of Rome. And finally Aeneas is "pious" also in his respect towards the gods, and in his punctilious observance of rites and offerings. It is an attitude towards all these things, and therefore implies a unity and an order among them: it is in fact an attitude towards life.

Aeneas is therefore not simply a man endowed with a number of virtues, each of which is a kind of piety – so that to call him *pius* in general is merely to use a convenient collective term. Piety is one. These are aspects of piety in different contexts, and they all imply each other. In his devotion to his father he is not being just an admirable son. There is personal affection, without which filial piety would be imperfect; but personal affection is not

piety. There is also devotion to his father as his father, as his progenitor: this is piety as the acceptance of a bond which one has not chosen. The quality of affection is altered, and its importance deepened, when it becomes love *due* to the object. But this filial piety is also the recognition of a further bond, that with the gods to whom such an attitude is pleasing: to fail in it would be to be guilty of impiety also towards the gods. The gods must therefore be gods worthy of this respect; and without gods, or a god, regarded in this way, filial piety must perish. For then it becomes no longer a *duty*: your feeling towards your father will be due merely to the fortunate accident of congeniality, or will be reduced to a sentiment of gratitude for care and consideration. Aeneas is pious towards the gods, and in no way does his piety appear more clearly than when the gods afflict him. He had a good deal to put up with from Juno; and even his mother Venus, as the benevolent instrument of his destiny, put him into one very awkward position.[37] There is in Aeneas a virtue – an essential ingredient in his piety – which is an analogue and foreshadow of Christian humility. Aeneas is the antithesis, in important respects, of either Achilles or Odysseus. In so far as he is heroic, he is heroic as the original Displaced Person, the fugitive from a ruined city and an obliterated society, of which the few other survivors except his own band languish as slaves of the Greeks. He was not to have, like Ulysses, marvellous and exciting adventures with such occasional erotic episodes as left no canker on the conscience of that wayfarer. He was not to return at last to the remembered hearth-fire, to find an exemplary wife awaiting him, to be reunited to his son, his dog and his servants. Aeneas' end is only a new beginning; and the whole point of the pilgrimage is something which will come to pass for future generations. His nearest likeness is Job, but his reward is not what Job's was, but is only in the accomplishment of his destiny.[38] He suffers for himself, he acts only in obedience. He is, in fact, the prototype of a Christian hero. For he is, humbly, a man with a mission; and the mission is everything.

The *pietas* is in this way explicable only in terms of *fatum*. This is a word which constantly recurs in the *Aeneid*; a word charged with meaning, and perhaps with more meaning than Virgil himself knew. Our nearest word is "destiny," and that is a word which means more than we can find any definitions[39†] for. It is a word which can have no meaning in a mechanical universe: if that which is wound up must run down, what destiny is there in that? Destiny is not necessitarianism, and it is not caprice: it is something essentially meaningful. Each man has his destiny, though some men are

undoubtedly "men of destiny" in a sense in which most men are not; and Aeneas is egregiously a man of destiny, since upon him the future of the Western World depends. But this is an election which cannot be explained, a burden and responsibility rather than a reason for self-glorification. It merely happens to one man and not to others, to have the gifts necessary in some profound crisis, but he can take no credit to himself for the gifts and the responsibility assigned to him. Some men have had a deep conviction of their destiny, and in that conviction have prospered; but when they cease to act as an instrument, and think of themselves as the active source of what they do, their pride is punished by disaster. Aeneas is a man guided by the deepest conviction of destiny, but he is a humble man who knows that this destiny is something not to be desired and not to be avoided. Of what power is he the servant? Not of the gods, who are themselves merely instruments, and sometimes rebellious ones.[40†] The concept of destiny leaves us with a mystery, but it is a mystery not contrary to reason, for it implies that the world, and the course of human history, have meaning.

Nor does destiny relieve mankind of moral responsibility. Such, at least, is my reading of the episode of Dido. The love affair of Aeneas and Dido is arranged by Venus: neither of the lovers was free to abstain. Now Venus herself is not acting on a whim, or out of mischief. She is certainly proud of the destiny of her son, but her behaviour is not that of a doting mother: she is herself an instrument for the realization of her son's destiny. Aeneas and Dido had to be united, and had to be separated. Aeneas did not demur; he was obedient to his fate. But he was certainly very unhappy about it, and I think that he felt that he was behaving shamefully. For why else should Virgil have contrived his meeting with the Shade of Dido in Hades, and the snub that he receives? When he sees Dido he tries to excuse himself for his betrayal. *Sed me iussa deum* – but I was under orders from the gods; it was a very unpleasant decision to have imposed upon me, and I am sorry that you took it so hard. She avoids his gaze and turns away, with a face as immobile[41†] as if it had been carved from flint or Marpesian rock.[42] I have no doubt that Virgil, when he wrote these lines, was assuming the role of Aeneas and feeling very decidedly a worm. No, destiny like that of Aeneas does not make the man's life any easier: it is a very heavy cross to bear. And I do not think of any hero of antiquity who found himself in quite this inevitable and deplorable position. I think that the poet who could best have emulated Virgil's treatment of this situation was Racine: certainly the Christian poet who gave the furious Roxane the blasting line *Rentre dans le néant*

d'où je t'ai fait sortir could, if anyone, have found words for Dido on this occasion.[43]

What then does this destiny, which no Homeric hero shares with Aeneas, mean? For Virgil's conscious mind, and for his contemporary readers, it means the *imperium romanum*. This in itself, as Virgil saw it, was a worthy justification of history. I think that he had few illusions and that he saw clearly both sides of every question – the case for the loser as well as the case for the winner. Nevertheless even those who have as little Latin as I must remember and thrill at the lines:

> His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono;
> Imperium sine fine dedi . . .
> Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
> (hae tibi erunt artes) pacique imponere morem,
> parcere subiectis et debellare superbos . . .[44]

I say that it was all the end of history that Virgil could be asked to find, and that it was a worthy end. And do you really think that Virgil was mistaken? You must remember that the Roman Empire was transformed into the Holy Roman Empire. What Virgil proposed to his contemporaries was the highest ideal even for an unholy Roman Empire, for any merely temporal empire. We are all, so far as we inherit the civilization of Europe, still citizens of the Roman Empire, and time has not yet proved Virgil wrong when he wrote *nec tempora pono: imperium sine fine dedi*. But, of course, the Roman Empire which Virgil imagined and for which Aeneas worked out his destiny was not exactly the same as the Roman Empire of the legionaries, the pro-consuls and governors, the business men and speculators, the demagogues and generals. It was something greater, but something which exists because Virgil imagined it. It remains an ideal, but one which Virgil passed on to Christianity to develop and to cherish.

In the end, it seems to me that the place which Dante assigned to Virgil in the future life, and the role of guide and teacher as far as the barrier which Virgil was not allowed to pass, was not capable of passing, is an exact statement of Virgil's relation to the Christian world.[45] We find the world of Virgil, compared to the world of Homer, to approximate to a Christian world, in the choice, order and relationship of its values. I have said that this implies no comparison between Homer the poet and Virgil the poet. Neither do I think that it is exactly a comparison between the worlds in which they lived, considered apart from the interpretation of these worlds which the poets

have given us. It may be merely that we know more about the world of Virgil, and understand it better; and therefore see more clearly how much, in the Roman idea according to Virgil, is due to the shaping hand and the philosophical mind of Virgil himself. For, in the sense in which a poet is a philosopher (as distinct from the sense in which a great poet may embody a great philosophy in great poetry) Virgil is the greatest philosopher of ancient Rome. It is not, therefore, simply that the civilization in which Virgil lived is nearer to the civilization of Christianity than is that of Homer; we can say that Virgil, among classical Latin poets or prose writers, is uniquely near to Christianity. There is a phrase which I have been trying to avoid, but which I now find myself obliged to use: *anima naturaliter Christiana*.[46] Whether we apply it to Virgil is a matter of personal choice; but I am inclined to think that he just falls short: and that is why I said just now that I think Dante has put Virgil in the right place. I will try to give the reason.

I think of another key word, besides *labor*, *pietas* and *fatum*,[47] which I wish that I could illustrate from Virgil in the same way. What key word can one find in the *Divine Comedy* which is absent from the *Aeneid*? One word of course is *lume*, and all the words expressive of the spiritual significance of light. But this, I think, as used by Dante, has a meaning which belongs only to explicit Christianity, fused with a meaning which belongs to mystical experience. And Virgil is no mystic. The term which one can justifiably regret the lack of in Virgil is *amor*. It is, above all others, the key word for Dante. I do not mean that Virgil never uses it. *Amor* recurs in the *Eclogues* (*amor vincit omnia*).[48] But the loves of the shepherds represent hardly more than a poetic convention. The use of the word *amor* in the *Eclogues* is not illuminated by meanings of the word in the *Aeneid* in the way in which, for example, we return to Paolo and Francesca with greater understanding of their passion after we have been taken through the circles of love in the *Paradiso*.[49] Certainly, the love of Aeneas and Dido has great tragic force. There is tenderness and pathos enough in the *Aeneid*. But Love is never given, to my mind, the same significance as a principle of order in the human soul, in society and in the universe that *pietas* is given; and it is not Love that causes *fatum*, or moves the sun and the stars.[50] Even for intensity of physical passion, Virgil is more tepid than some other Latin poets, and far below the rank of Catullus.[51] If we are not chilled we at least feel ourselves, with Virgil, to be moving in a kind of emotional twilight. Virgil was, among all authors of classical antiquity, one for whom the world made sense, for whom it had order and dignity, and for whom, as for no one before his time except

the Hebrew prophets, history had meaning. But he was denied the vision of the man who could say:

"Within its depths I saw ingathered, bound by love in one volume, the scattered leaves of all the universe."

Legato con amor in un volume.[52]

TEXTUAL NOTE

In the *Listener*, the essay began with the following paragraph, omitted in *SR* and *OPP*:

Everyone knows of the importance of Vergil for St. Augustine, and of the status conceded to him in the Christian tradition, culminating in his elevation by the greatest of all Christian poets to the position of guide through the first two stages of the *Divine Comedy*. Everyone knows that Vergil became, in the Middle Ages, an almost mythical figure, first as a prophet of the Incarnation, and then as a fabulous magician whose poem could be employed for purposes of divination.[53] To elaborate on such matters would be the task of a scholar and historian, and that is the first reason for my avoiding this course: I should not be able to tell you anything that you did not already know. I do not propose to discuss the history of Vergilian studies, the story of his adoption by Christian writers, or his influences upon the Fathers of the Church, or his reputation during the Middle Ages. There is, however, another reason.

NOTES

1. As printed in *OPP*. TSE served as the Virgil Society's first president (1943-44) and delivered the Presidential Address "What Is a Classic?" in 1944 (6.669). He wrote to W. F. Jackson Knight on 18 Jan 1951: "I don't know anything about the Third Programme Vergil, and I am doubtful whether I shall have time for any broadcasting, but I trust I shall hear more of this scheme in due course." Broadcast on 9 Sept 1951 for the BBC Third Programme (TS in King's P25) and printed as "Vergil and the Christian World" in the *Listener*, 46 (13 Sept 1951), 411-12, 423-4 (hereafter *Listener*). The *Listener* text was revised by TSE (his corrections are in the copy he gave to John Hayward, now in King's HC2.1.4[11]) and reprinted in *Sewanee Review*, 61 (Jan/Mar 1953), [1]-14 (hereafter *SR*). TSE sent the text to the editor Monroe K. Spears on 6 Nov 1952 and wrote to him on 17 Dec: "I do not need to see the proofs as I think I made all the corrections necessary in *The Listener* text." TSE made further revisions (Faber archive) before reprinting the essay in *OPP*. In *Listener* and *SR*, "Virgil" and "Virgilian" read "Vergil" and "Vergilian" throughout. TSE wrote to Vernon Watkins on 20 Sept 1951: "The BBC and *Listener*, I suppose under the influence of Jackson Knight, spell it like this. *I* prefer *VIRGIL*" (Berg). Substantive differences in the texts are noted; minor punctuation and spelling differences are not recorded.

2†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "largely due to accidents, to irrelevances, to misunderstandings and superstitions."

3†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "What interests me to consider"

4†. In *Listener* and *SR*, this is followed by: "Sympathy is only one form of valuation."

5†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "speaks in exaggerated language for what purports to be"

6. The Roman politician Gaius Asinius Pollio (75 BC-4 AD), a patron of Virgil and a friend of Horace, became a consul in 40 BC. It was at this time that Virgil addressed the fourth *Eclogue*

to him, which hails the approach of a new era to be inaugurated by Pollio. This Golden Age is to be fulfilled by a child soon to be born.

7. *Eclogues*, IV, ll. 4-6; 15-17; 24-25; in *Virgil. I: Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid I-VI*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1942), 29-31. This edition is in TSE's library.

8†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "Octavian,"

9. The French critic and historian Jérôme Carcopino (1881-1970) identified numerous neo-Pythagorean elements in the fourth *Eclogue* in *Virgile et le mystère de la IV^e^ Églogue* (Paris: L'Artisan du livre, 1930), among which are the appearance of the Virgin heralding the start of the Golden Age (134-35); the appeal to Apollo, of whom Pythagoras was regarded as an incarnation (51-52); the concept of the Great Year (85, 142-43); the *filia* (friendship) that will be established among all species enabling them to live in harmony (102, 105), and so forth.

10†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "The poem does not seem to have attracted any particular attention, from the point of view of its mystery,"

11. The Book of Isaiah contains the prophecies of the Virgin birth of the Messiah (7:14) and of the servant who suffered and died for our sins (52:13-53:12), identified in the New Testament with Christ.

12. *Eclogues*, IV.49 (33); "great scion of Jupiter" is TSE's translation.

13. Lactantius believed that the fourth *Eclogue* referred to Christ, but he applied the prophecy to the coming of Christ at the millennium. He seems to have credited the Cumaean Sibyl and not Virgil himself with prophetic power in *Divinae institutiones* VII.24. Like Lactantius, whom he read, Augustine argued that the prophetic content of the *Eclogue* came not from Virgil, but from the Sibyl at Cumae (*De civitate Dei*, X.27). Unlike Augustine, Dante makes no mention of the Sibyl in *Purgatorio* XXII.70-72, where he has Statius quote lines 5-7 of the fourth *Eclogue* in his explanation that it was Virgil who led him to Christianity. In poem XVIII of his collection *Les Voix intérieures* (1837), "Dans Virgile parfois," Victor Hugo refers to the prophetic message of the *Eclogue*: "C'est que, rêvant déjà ce qu'à présent on sait, / Il chantait presque à l'heure où Jésus vagissait" (ll. 3-4). *Les Voix intérieures. Les Rayons et les Ombres* (Paris: Hachette, 1869), 91. *Trans*: "Dreaming beforehand things that we have come to know, / He sang almost when Jesus first began to cry." *Selected Poems of Victor Hugo: A Bilingual Edition*, trans. E. H. Blackmore and A. M. Blackmore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 79. Carcopino quotes the first two lines of this poem in his discussion of the "lumière surnaturelle" perceived in the fourth *Eclogue* by the Christians of the sixth century and, in later centuries, by Dante and Hugo (17-18).

14†. In *Listener*: "religious"

15. In *Roman Vergil* (London: Faber, 1944) the English classicist W. F. Jackson Knight (1895-1964), brother of G. Wilson Knight, traces back to Virgil's knowledge of old folklore the conception of characters such as Camilla of the Volsci in the *Aeneid* (93); recurrent images like circular and labyrinthine movements (167-68); the flowers inscribed with names of Kings in the *Eclogues* (265), and so forth.

16†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "and there is still better"

17†. In his copy of the *Listener* (Faber archive), TSE changed this to: "and there is as good reason for admiring Isaiah as a poet as for claiming Virgil as a prophet." The Book of Isaiah contains passages in both prose and poetry.

18†. This sentence is not present in *Listener* and *SR*.

19†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "I have had to speak about the fourth *Eclogue*, because it is so important in beginning the history"

20†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "He looks both ways, he makes a peculiar liaison between the old world and the new, and of this peculiar station"

21†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "This question has been best answered by the late Theodor Haecker, in a little book on Vergil, which was published some years ago in an English translation under the title of *Vergil the Father of the West*."

22. Theodor Haecker's *Vergil: Vater des Abendlandes* (1931) was translated as *Virgil, Father of the West* by Arthur Wesley Wheen (London: Sheed & Ward, 1934). Virgil's anticipation of the Christian world is discussed in particular in chapter X "Anima Naturaliter Christiana" (109-14).

23†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "surpassed, and perhaps not equalled,"

24. In his seventh year at Smith Academy (1904-05), TSE's Latin and Greek reading lists included Virgil's *Aeneid*, Books III-VI, and Homer's *Iliad*. In fact, he had begun reading the *Aeneid*, Books I and II, during the previous year (1903-04). TSE's copy of Homer's *Odyssey, with Notes for the Use of Schools and Colleges*, ed. John J. Owen (New York, s.d.) is signed "Thomas S. Eliot" (King's).

25. *Troilus and Cressida* II.ii.183-86 (Hector to Paris and Troilus)

26. TSE wrote to Frank Morley on Whit Monday [29 May] 1944: "I have just been re-reading V. with Loeb, and he is all right I can tell you: it's even better than I thought it was 40 years ago, and I hadn't read any Dante then, and to find Virgil BIGGER than he seemed BEFORE Dante is no mean tribute" (Berg).

27†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "accepted – I do not mean the civilisation of the time of the Trojan wars, but that of the time at which the Homeric poems were put into shape –"

28. Chapters VII and VIII of Haecker's *Virgil, Father of the West* examine key words in Virgil, and are entitled "Fate" and "Tears," respectively.

29†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "and"

30†. This sentence is omitted in *SR*. *The Georgics of Virgil*, trans. C. Day Lewis (London: Jonathan Cape, 1940). TSE wrote to Mark Wardle on 28 Jan 1947 that Day Lewis has "distinguished himself as a translator with a version of the *Georgics*."

31†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "duty of any people"

32. Josef Pieper discusses these issues in *Leisure the Basis of Culture* (London: Faber, 1952), to which TSE had recently written the introduction (7.654). Pieper writes: "Leisure, like contemplation, is of a higher order than the *vita activa* (although the active life is the proper human life in a more special sense)" (56).

33†. In *SR*: "the one occupation noble,"

34†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "And yet it is the man who affirms the apparently incompatible who may be right."

35. *Aeneid* I.220, 378; IV.393; V.26, 286, 685; VI.9, 176, 232

36. *Aeneid* VI.679-901

37. The goddess Juno is hostile to Aeneas because he is destined to found an empire that will destroy Carthage, her favorite city. In Book IV, Venus arranges with Juno for Dido to fall in love with Aeneas to divert him from his destiny of founding Rome. One day when Dido and Aeneas are out hunting, Juno causes a storm that forces the two to seek refuge in a cave where they make love; the two subsequently live as a couple on their return to Carthage.

38. In the Book of Job, Job's faith is challenged by Satan, whom God allows to take away his temporal possessions. In his suffering and bewilderment, Job stops short of accusing God of injustice and receives temporal and spiritual rewards as a result.

39†. In his copy of the *Listener* (Faber archive), TSE changed this to "definition"

40†. In *Listener*: "though sometimes rebellious ones."

41†. In *Listener* and *SR*: "expressionless"

42. *Aeneid* VI.461. TSE then paraphrases up to line 471 (539).

43. *Trans*: Return to the nothingness from which I let you out. Roxane's words to Bajazet in Racine's play *Bajazet* (1672), II.i. *Néant*, erroneously capitalized in *SR*, was corrected by TSE. This line is quoted by Charles Du Bos in "Sur l'*Introduction à la méthode de Léonard de Vinci*, de Paul Valéry," *Approximations* (Paris: Plon, 1922), 9. TSE thanked Du Bos on 16 June 1927 for an inscribed copy of *Approximations* (*L3* 563) and quoted from it in "Baudelaire in our Time" (1927) (3.80, n.29).

44. *Aeneid* I.278-79; VI.851-53. *Trans*: "For these I set neither bounds nor periods of empire; dominion without end have I bestowed" (261); "remember thou, O Roman, to rule the nations with thy sway – these shall be thine arts – to crown Peace with Law, to spare the humbled, and to tame in war the proud!" (567).

45. Virgil guides Dante through Hell and Purgatory and leaves him at the threshold of the earthly Paradise in *Purgatorio* XXVII.127-42.

46. *Trans*: a naturally Christian soul. A phrase used by Tertullian (*Apologeticus* XVII.6). But TSE is likely to refer to Haecker's use of this expression in relation to Virgil in chapter X of *Virgil, Father of the West*, entitled "Anima Naturaliter Christiana" (109-14).

47. TSE put "*labor*, *pietas* and" within brackets in his copy of the *Listener* (King's).

48. TSE misquotes from *Eclogues* X.69: "Omnia vincit Amor" [Love conquers all] (74-75). He may have had in mind the Latin form "Amor vincit omnia" used by Geoffrey Chaucer in his description of the Nun Prioress in the General Prologue (l. 162), which he marked in the margin of his copy of *The Student's Chaucer* (New York: OUP; London: Henry Frowde, [ca. 1908]), signed "Thomas S. Eliot" (Houghton).

49. The story of the adulterous lovers Paolo and Francesca is recounted in *Inferno* V.

50. TSE translates the last line of Dante's *Paradiso*: "l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle" (XXXIII.145) (*DC3* 408).

51. TSE read the love lyrics addressed to Lesbia by Catullus in Francis Simpson's Latin edition of the *Select Poems of Catullus* (1892).

52. TSE quotes the Temple Classics translation of *Paradiso* XXXIII.85-87: "Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna, / legato con amore in un volume, / ciò che per l'universo si squaderna" (*DC3* 404-05).

53. Augustine read Virgil as a young boy, and the Latin poet influenced him throughout his life; Dante chose Virgil as his guide through Hell and Purgatory. Partly because of the fourth *Eclogue*, Virgil was believed in medieval times to have the abilities of a prophet. TSE likely read of the practice of "Sortes Virgilianae" in Johnson's life of Cowley; an editorial note in his edition explains: "Consulting the Virgilian Lots, Sortes Virgilianae, is a method of divination by the opening of Virgil, and applying to the circumstances of the peruser the first passage in either of the two pages that he accidentally fixes his eye on" (*Lives*, 4).

Speech at the opening of Le Livre anglais exhibition

"Le Livre anglais" exhibition was opened by TSE on the morning of 16 Nov 1951 in the Galerie Mazarine of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris and ran until the end of Dec. The event was reported in the *Times* of 17 Nov, "English Books in Paris," with a summary of and quotations from TSE's speech (5). A fuller report appeared under the same title in the *TLS* of 30 Nov, providing more details of the rare books, manuscripts, bindings, and volumes important in the history of the English book. It concluded by stating that TSE and the organizers "have done a service to Anglo-French cultural relations. But it is ironical that such an unprecedented assembly of English literary treasures should be generally inaccessible to an English public" (772). The catalog of the exhibition was published as *Le Livre anglais. Trésors des collections anglaises* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1951).

Monsieur le Président, Your Excellencies, Monsieur Julien Cain; Ladies and Gentlemen:[1]

It would, I am sure, be difficult to find one person who combined all the qualifications desirable for opening this Exhibition of Le Livre Anglais. It should be someone of great public eminence, to face without flinching so distinguished an assembly. It should be someone with a mastery of public speech, both formal and informal, to satisfy the high standards of oratory in this country. And it should be someone with a profound knowledge of the art and science of bibliography, to introduce an exhibition, to the preparation of which many distinguished scholars, librarians and bibliophiles have given their labours for many months. I can only suppose that the organisers of the exhibition, faced with the difficulty of finding anyone who combined all these talents, have chosen to settle the problem by taking someone who possesses none of them.

I am merely a man of letters; and men of letters should emulate those small marine animals, the name of which is known only to biologists, whose skeletons contribute to the formation of coral islands. Like these obscure little creatures, it is only what we leave behind us that matters; I think that we should work in privacy and silence, our presence revealed only by the scratching of the pen or the tapping of the typewriter, making our small contributions to the great edifice of literature. The only commendation I can make of myself for this occasion, is my consciousness of my own inadequacy.

The initial impulse towards the realisation of this exhibition, was given by H. M. The Queen, when she visited the memorable exhibition in London two years ago, of "A Thousand Years of French Books."[2] Her Majesty then expressed the hope, that a similar exhibition of English books might be offered to the French people in Paris. What you are about to inspect represents the results of the attempt to give effect to the Queen's wishes, and to return the compliment which you so generously paid us. We have been fortunate in our patronage: that of the President of the French Republic and H. M. The King. Our French friends have given us every facility and advantage, with unfailing generosity and good will. The printing of the Catalogue was done at their charge, and we are greatly indebted to them for this gesture. Librarians and owners of private collections in England have responded most readily to the formidable demands made upon them. This exhibition does I believe demonstrate fully, and on a scale never attempted before, the achievement of the English in literature and in book production.[3]

In two respects, certainly, we cannot emulate France. The first is that of the field of illuminated MSS. We cannot boast of a Fouquet. But though we can offer nothing comparable to the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berri*, for example,[4] I hope that you will be favourably impressed by the small but choice collection of illuminated MSS. in this exhibition: notably the 10th Century *Benedictional of St. Aethelwold*, the finest of its period and style in existence, which incidentally, has never before left the country of its origin.[5] Second, we cannot rival the splendour of your French bindings, for French bindings from at least the 16th Century onwards are above comparison, thanks to the great collectors, like Grolier, whose pride in their books expressed itself in the beauty and richness with which they clothed them.[6] But we can, I believe, offer some bindings worthy of your attention end even admiration. Notwithstanding such shortcomings, this display of English illuminated MSS., printed books, literary autographs, choice bindings and typography, is the richest ever given in public in one place and time, in any country.

It is my duty and pleasure to thank all those who have given their encouragement and all those who have helped to organise the exhibition. M. le Président and H. M. The King, its benevolent Patrons; Monsieur Cain and his staff for their invaluable and whole-hearted co-operation from first to last; the British Council and its Committee of experts responsible for choosing, cataloguing, transporting and mounting the exhibits; and not

least the public libraries and private collectors who have lent their treasures so freely and trustingly. In particular, the Bodleian Library of Oxford University, for their noble and unprecedented gesture in sending abroad some of their most precious possessions, among them the only known copy of Shakespeare's first book.[7] I must add a word of explanation and regret. The British Museum, the mother-library of the whole English-speaking world, is forbidden by Act of Parliament to allow any of its books to leave the country.[8] Our Organising Committee, whose Chairman, ironically enough, is Keeper of Printed Books of that Library, made every effort to plead for an exception to this rule.[9] But the legal situation is clear and precise; the exception could not be made. It is greatly to be regretted, but it is inevitable; and we must bow before the inflexibility of the law of the land. There are other famous libraries, notably that of Trinity College, Cambridge, which are forbidden by statute to send their books overseas. The fact that we have been denied these resources makes the opulence and comprehensiveness of the Exhibition the more remarkable.

I said at the beginning that I am no bibliographer but only a man of letters. It is fitting that the man of letters should pay a word of tribute to the bibliographer: those whose primary concern is with the soul of literature owe a great debt to the scholars who preserve its physical body from corruption. The bibliographer is a man whom I regard with gratitude, and even with a certain awe. I have the benefit of numbering several distinguished bibliographers among my acquaintance; I have even had the privilege of listening to bibliographers discussing their mysteries among themselves, in a technical language of which I only grasp the import of an isolated phrase here and there. I am aware of the years of training and experience necessary to qualify those whose labours bear fruit in an exhibition like this.

To a man of letters a book is primarily a tool; his own library is a "working library," a necessity and not a luxury. But he needs the best tools; and he depends upon the scholars to provide him with the best tools, in the form of the most accurate texts of the predecessors whom he must study. He also hopes that his own writings will in turn become tools for later generations; and he depends upon the scholar to safeguard them to this end. For a poet, in particular, the accuracy of text, both in the books he must read and in those which he writes, is of primary importance. It is very easy, as every writer knows, for errors to creep in to successive reprintings: the preservation and study of first editions, and of all early editions, is a necessary safeguard. And for the poet particularly it matters very much how his poems are printed:

that they should be set in the most suitable type, that there should neither be too much nor too little on one page, that the page should be of the right size and have the right margins, even that the paper should be of the right kind. For me, there is always a thrill of pleasure, a feeling of increased understanding, when I see the text of a great poem in the first edition: in that form in which the author himself first saw it in print. I seem to experience some of the delight and amazement with which appreciative contemporaries greeted the appearance of what is now a familiar, an almost too familiar classic of our literature. I quote a sentence from the preface written by a distinguished bibliographer, who should have been present to-day, to the catalogue to another exhibition:

> It was, in fact, by means of these first folios, quartos, and octavos, that the genius of English poetry, in its incomparable variety and appeal, found its way into print and so became accessible to a poet's contemporaries; and, with the help of scholars, bibliographers, and all whose business is with the transmission of texts, to later generations of readers. The survival of English poetry, indeed, ultimately derives from the existence and preservation of these primary printed sources.[10]

There is a still larger consideration than this. The history of book production reflects the history of our civilization. The reverence which a people shows to the early editions of its great works of literature, ensures a standard for future production; and the care which it gives to the maintenance of this standard, is a measure of its respect for its own culture. When a people ceases to care whether its great literature is perpetuated in worthy form, it will also become indifferent to the wisdom and truth in that literature, and to the beauty of the words in which that wisdom and truth has been expressed. The beauty of the illuminated manuscripts of the middle ages, the dignity of the early Bibles, reflect the reverence of the scribes and of the printers for the meaning of the words which they transcribed or printed.

Of all modern languages, it is the English and the French languages which can boast, in the fullest sense, a "literature": not only authors of solitary genius, for other languages have been the media for authors as great as our greatest; but a "literature" of the widest range and greatest variety. It is therefore appropriate, that we should return the compliment which you paid us with the French exhibition in London, by offering an exhibition of our best in Paris. And it is right that we should remind ourselves of the honour we

have paid to our literature in the past, so that we may continue to exercise the same piety in the future.

In closing, may I say that I am very much aware of the honour of opening such an exhibition in this noble chamber, built by the great Cardinal and Statesman who was himself one of the greatest bibliophiles and benefactors to lovers of books in our two nations.[11]

So I now have pleasure . . . . . .

NOTES

1. The president of France, Vincent Auriol (1884-1966), in attendance at this opening, was patron of the exhibition together with King George VI (1895-1952). Julien Cain (1887-1974) was the general administrator of the Bibliothèque nationale. The president was escorted round the collection by Cain, TSE, the chairman of the British Council, Sir Ronald Adam, who invited TSE to open the exhibition, the British ambassador to France, Sir Oliver Harvey, the French ambassador to Britain, René Massigli, and other French and English dignitaries.

2. Desmond Flower gathered together a collection of books and manuscripts for an exhibition arranged by the National Book League entitled "A Thousand Years of French Books." It was opened at the league's headquarters in London on 30 Sept 1948 by Sir Duff Cooper, former British ambassador to France, and ran until 27 Nov. Flower also compiled the catalog, *A Thousand Years of French Books*, published by Cambridge UP in 1948. Queen Mary (1867-1953), wife of the late King George V, visited the exhibition on 4 Oct.

3. Desmond Flower hailed the exhibition as "the greatest assemblage of the treasures of our literature and book-production that has ever been brought together." "Le Livre anglais," *Book Handbook*, 2/4 (1951-52), 163-71; here 163 and 168.

4. The exhibition included two miniatures by the French painter Jean Fouquet (1420-81) and the manuscript of *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* [*The Very Rich Hours of the Duc de Berry*], an illuminated book of hours made for Duke Jean de Berry by the Limbourg brothers between 1412 and 1416.

5. The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, a tenth-century illuminated book of blessings and benedictions held in the British Library, is one of most important surviving manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Winchester school.

6. The bibliophile Jean Grolier de Servières, viscount d'Aguisy (1489/90-1565), had a collection of over 3,000 volumes in elaborately ornate bindings in calf or morocco with gold-tooled interlaced and geometric designs.

7. One of the items (no. 65) loaned by the Bodleian Library was the only known copy of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (London: R. Field, 1593), which is the first book by Shakespeare to have been published (*Le Livre anglais. Trésors des collections anglaises*, 51).

8. The British Museum Act of 1753 forbids it from making loans overseas.

9. Frank Chalton Francis (1901-88), Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum, presided over the committee of experts that arranged the selection of English books and joined TSE and others in guiding the president around the exhibition.

10. John Hayward, *English Poetry: A Catalogue of First & Early Editions of Works of the English Poets from Chaucer to the Present Day, Exhibited by The National Book League at 7 Albemarle Street, London 1947* (Cambridge: Published for the National Book League by the Cambridge University Press, 1947), vii. On 16 Dec 1951, TSE wrote to Edward McKnight Kauffer that the Livre anglais exhibition "had been arranged by a committee of which John seems to have been the only active and useful member."

11. Jules Mazarin (1602-61), born Giulio Raimondo Mazzarino, the French-Italian cardinal who succeeded Richelieu as first minister of France (1642-61), was a notable bibliophile. His personal library, which he bequeathed to the Collège des Quatre-Nations in Paris, later became the Bibliothèque Mazarine, the oldest public library in the country.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The eight-page typescript, with TSE's holograph pencil emendations, is in the Hayward Bequest (H2s), King's College. A note by John Hayward on the front cover states that this is "The copy used at the ceremony." Earlier incomplete drafts with TSE's ink emendations and Hayward's pencil revisions, some of which have been incorporated in the final copy, are in P23.

"Those Who Need Privacy and Those Whose Need Is Company"

An address to Cecil Houses

Cecil Houses (Incorporated), 23rd Report, London (1950-51), 15-17[1]

I must apologize first, for arriving on the stage so obviously prepared with very full notes. The fact simply is that I have unfortunately not had the time to prepare an extempore address. The unpremeditated flash of wit or pathos which is so appropriate on such occasions costs me so much labour to think out, to say nothing of the labour of memorizing it, that I must fall back, having been very busy lately, on my usual style and method, which, as is fairly well known, are rather heavy and very dry. If, however, I add that it is very rare that I speak in public for good causes and charitable enterprises, I am not mentioning that as a further excuse for myself, but merely to point out that one does not do something which one knows one does rather badly unless one is sure it is a very good cause indeed. It is only on this occasion, when I have some first-hand knowledge and some complete convictions, that I go through this ordeal for this reason.

I have just used the phrase "charitable enterprises," but in relation to Cecil Houses I think I should correct that. They are certainly in the widest sense charitable in that they are fulfilling a public need through private enterprise. But the fact that it is only the capital expenditure for which appeal is made to individual generosity, and that the aim is always that the running expenses to be provided should be contributed by the beneficiaries, makes a particular appeal to me, as you will see. But I shall not talk about Cecil Houses directly – I shall leave that to those better qualified.[2]

I thought the best contribution I could make would be to put before you a general observation or two, and indicate briefly my application of those observations to this undertaking. This cause for which we are assembled today is the setting up of a residential house for elderly women. My experience of old people is that they are divisible into two kinds in one respect and are identical in another respect. In the respect in which they differ I should say that the old people who need help are of two species: those who primarily need privacy at the end of their lives and those whose primary need

is company. But the resemblance, which is more important for my purpose, is that they all want to some extent to be independent. This desire for independence which touches the roots of self-respect is equally strong irrespective of class or economic status.

I have some knowledge of old ladies, and I have always been very fond of old ladies, and in the course of my life have collected in my memory some very choice specimens indeed. But today I am thinking particularly of one whom I knew for a number of years. She insisted on living alone and caring entirely for herself in one room up to a very advanced age, and would probably have gone on doing so up to the end, for she was otherwise strong and sound, but for increasing blindness. The fact that she had outlived all her relatives who might have looked after her necessitated her eventual removal to a public institution. I think it was only after she had burned herself rather badly fumbling with her gas ring that she consented to do so. I visited her several times, and while I am sure that she was well looked after I know that she pined as a result of being merely an inmate instead of a paying guest, and of having no further control over her own tiny pension. But what hurt her most was the curious fact that she had to be registered in this institution under her maiden name, although she had been for sixty odd years a genuine and *bona fide* widow. This was for the following reason. The synagogue at which she had been married a great many years before had been destroyed in the blitz, together with all its records. As the public authorities had no documentary evidence of her wedlock, they were obliged to register her as a spinster. Indeed, the first time I went there I had some difficulty in finding her, because the attendants all seemed to know her as Miss X instead of Mrs. Y. Her last wish in this world was one to which I am happy to say we were able to give effect. She wanted to be buried under her married name in the grave of her family. Whether this represented a craving for privacy or a craving for company perhaps is a matter of opinion, but I am inclined to think that it implies something of both.

Independence is a relative term, and probably self-respect is a more comprehensive way of putting what I mean. It is purely accidental, but I think it is appropriate, in relation to an undertaking associated with the name of Chesterton, that what I have to say occurs to me in the form of a paradox.[3] I suppose it is one of the benevolent motives of the Welfare State to cherish people's self-respect by giving them what they need and calling it, not "charity" but a "public service" to which they are entitled. The interesting point is that the effect can so easily be exactly the opposite; and this is one of several

good reasons for maintaining private charities. For the effect of the State looking after everybody can be that everybody comes to feel himself to be nobody, to be merely an indifferent unit in a series; one may feel no longer of any personal interest to any individual, to any one person. One can become merely the object of occasional attention from a harassed official who is dealing with a great many similar cases, about none of which he has time to learn very much, in every hour of every working day. Of course, this is unfortunate also for the soul of the official, who instead of a vocation has only found a salaried post. But with him or her I am not here concerned. I wish to make the point simply that the sense of self-respect which everyone needs and has the right to is not necessarily preserved by abolishing "charity" in favour of "social service." You are offering perhaps a more flattering name, but the improvement may be only verbal while the deterioration in status may be real. What matters for the preservation of self-respect, as it seems to me, is the relation between the person who gives and the person who receives; and it may be better to be looked after by people who care about us as individuals than by a State which does not.

My particular interest in Cecil Houses, and in this particular house, is that for one thing they are not so big as to be impersonal. We need more of them rather than bigger ones. Every resident – I say resident, you notice, and not inmate, a word I dislike – of the new house for old ladies will, I am sure, always be the subject of personal interest to those who administer it, and will feel also that she is free to come or go, and will have the pride of feeling that she pays for what she receives. So it is only in contrast to State care and guardianship that we call this a charity, in that it appeals to the conscience and the charitable feelings of individual supporters, but in relation to those who will benefit by it, it certainly is not.

T. S. ELIOT, O.M.

NOTES

1. On the front cover of the copy TSE inscribed to John Hayward, he wrote in ink: "for J. H. whose interest compelled me to take part." On the title page, TSE added in pencil: "p. 15. Notice that this is the short hand report of a speech made from very full notes (one or two connections missing)" (King's HC2.1.4[13]). Listing his engagements for June 1951 in a letter to Herbert Read of 21 Mar, TSE included "possibly a platform appearance on behalf of Cecil Houses" (Victoria). The speech was delivered at a public meeting in His Majesty's Theatre, London on 5 June 1951.

2. The philanthropist and journalist Ada Elizabeth Chesterton (1869-1962) referred to herself as Mrs. Cecil Chesterton after her marriage to G. K. Chesterton's brother Cecil. In 1926, she founded Cecil Houses to offer shelter to homeless women, and after World War II, she established

the Cecil Residential Club for Working Girls on Small Wages. The present appeal for assistance was on behalf of the Old Ladies' Home, which was being built in North Kensington. The Cecil Residential Club in Kensington for female pensioners was opened in 1953.

3. G. K. Chesterton was well known for his use of paradox in his writings and had written an essay on the subject entitled "Two Kinds of Paradox" (1911). His final collection of detective stories, published after his death in 1936, was *The Paradoxes of Mr. Pond*. When comparing Charles Williams's stories with Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday* in "The Significance of Charles Williams" (1946), TSE praised "Chesterton's gift for humour and paradox" (6.773).

World Tribute to Bernard Shaw

To the Editor of *Time and Tide*

Time and Tide, 32 (15 Dec 1951) 1231-32

Sir, – The letter, headed *World Tribute to Bernard Shaw*, which appeared in your issue of December 1, deserves the most serious consideration. We are asked to contribute to a fund of £250,000 (with, it is hoped, American, Dominion and foreign assistance), as a memorial to the eminent dramatist.[1] Two hundred and fifty thousand pounds is a large sum. I do not know of any precedent for such a tribute to the memory of any man of letters. At the present time, when good causes are as numerous as ever, and when the resources of most of those in the habit of supporting good causes are more limited than ever, we are obliged to scrutinise carefully the aims of every appeal, before yielding to its persuasion. And there is one fact which makes this appeal still more unusual. Mr Shaw bequeathed a substantial fortune to quite a different cause from that which we are now asked to support: namely, to the movement for the simplification of the spelling of the English language.[2]

The letter to which I refer sets forth three purposes to which this sum of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds is to be applied; and these three purposes should be examined one by one. Of the first, "to assist young playwrights, authors and musicians, especially to facilitate the publication or performance of their work," one can only say that, put so generally, it is an aim at which no one can cavil. I do not think that such subvention would make much difference to *publication*, because it is my belief that reputable publishers will still publish, even at a loss, any work of creative imagination which they believe to be first-rate; and that they are not likely to be persuaded to publish any work of the value of which they are doubtful, merely because of a subsidy.[3] Stage or concert production, however, is another matter. But my point is, that before we give money to such a cause, we need to know how it is proposed that the money should be administered, and, above all, by whom.

The third aim (I leave the second for final consideration) is the maintenance of the house at Ayot St Lawrence which Mr Shaw bequeathed to the nation. I gather that Mr Shaw did not endow the upkeep of this gift.[4] I know

the house only from the photographs which appeared in the press after Mr Shaw's demise: but I cannot help wondering whether there are not other houses in England, falling or likely to fall into decay, of historic interest and of beauty without and within, which have a greater claim upon our generosity and self-denial.

The second aim seems to me that requiring the most study: "the encouragement of the worthy presentation of Shaw's plays in appropriate Festival settings, and if possible, the formation of a repertory company to perform here and to tour the English-speaking world." England and Ireland have produced other great dramatists. The work of Mr Shaw is not likely to be forgotten. Several of his plays should certainly be included in the repertory of a National Theatre; they will, in any case, be performed so long as England retains any pride in its theatre. I cannot see why the plays of Mr Shaw, simply for their dramatic merit, should enjoy an advantage over the plays of Shakespeare, Jonson, Congreve, Yeats and Synge, among which some of them already have an assured place. I say "simply for their dramatic merit." I mean that if we are to give them this advantage, it can only be justified by our belief in the importance of the "message" of these plays; by our belief in the truth and importance of the moral, social and religious philosophy to the propagation of which Mr Shaw gave his life. We have, therefore, to decide each according to his attitude to this philosophy.

I am, etc.,

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The appeal for contributions to this fund was launched by the International Memorial Appeal and signed by the president R. A. Butler, MP and his vice presidents (among whom was former Prime Minister Clement Attlee) "to raise this from all over the English-speaking world and also from other countries especially interested in Shaw and his works. It is, however, only fitting that this country, in which Shaw lived for so long and was so well known, should make a large and important contribution" (1157).

On 10 Dec, TSE wrote a confidential letter to the editor, Lady Rhondda, enclosing a copy of his letter to *Time and Tide* for her consideration of it as appropriate or not and expressing his willingness to consider alterations and suggestions if necessary. "It is highly distasteful to have to write as I have done, about an appeal for a Memorial to anybody. Nevertheless, it is a case about which I feel very strongly, and feel that I ought not to keep silence, whatever censures I incur. The imposture has gone on too long." The letter was printed as received.

2. In his will, Shaw bequeathed a considerable part of his estate to support the creation of a new English phonemic alphabet. TSE later criticized Shaw's enterprise when discussing the differences in spelling between American and British English in 1953: "And about spelling, I do

not believe in hard and fast rules, and least of all in the hard and fast rules of champions of simplified spelling, such as the late Bernard Shaw" (7.795).

3. TSE was averse to the notion of subsidizing the publication of poetry : "I have even heard it suggested, as a palliative of the deplorable fact that people will not buy new books of verse by young poets, that the Arts Council should subsidize publishers – to produce more of the unsaleable commodity" (7.479-80). He outlined his case against the subsidization of poetry in his 1949 address to the Publishers' Association (7.456).

4. Shaw lived in the village of Ayot St Lawrence, Hertfordshire, from 1906 until he died in 1950. His house, Shaw's Corner, was given to the National Trust in 1944.

Introduction to *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, by Josef Pieper; trans. Alexander Dru

London: Faber & Faber, 1952. Pp. 169; Introduction, 11-17.[1]

The complaint is frequently heard that our time has little to boast of in the way of philosophy. Whether this deficiency is due to some ailment of philosophy itself, or to the diversion of able philosophical minds towards other studies, or simply to a shortage of philosophers, is never made clear: these are divisions of the question which are apt to become confused. Certainly, "Where are the great philosophers?" is a rhetorical question often asked by those who pursued their philosophical studies forty or fifty years ago. Allowing for the possibility that the great figures of our youth have become magnified by the passage of time, and for the probability that most of those who ask the question have not followed modern philosophical developments very closely, there remains some justification of the lament. It may be merely a longing for the appearance of a philosopher whose writings, lectures and personality will arouse the imagination as Bergson, for instance, aroused it forty years ago;[2] but it may be also the expression of a need for philosophy in an older meaning of the word – the need for new authority to express *insight* and *wisdom*.

To those who pine for philosophy in this ampler sense, logical positivism is the most conspicuous object of censure.[3] Certainly, logical positivism is not a very nourishing diet for more than the small minority which has been conditioned to it. When the time of its exhaustion arrives, it will probably appear, in retrospect, to have been for our age the counterpart of surrealism: for as surrealism seemed to provide a method of producing works of art without imagination so logical positivism seems to provide a method of philosophizing without insight and wisdom. The attraction which it thus offers to the immature mind may have unfortunate results for some of those who pursue their undergraduate studies under its influence. Yet I believe that in the longer view, logical positivism will have proved of service by explorations of thought which we shall, in future, be unable to ignore; and even if some of its avenues turn out to be blind alleys, it is, after all, worth while exploring a blind alley, if only to discover that it *is* blind. And, what is more important for my theme, I believe that the sickness of philosophy, an

obscure recognition of which moves those who complain of its decline, has been present too long to be attributable to any particular contemporary school of thought.

At the time when I myself was a student of philosophy – I speak of a period some thirty-five to forty years ago – the philosopher was beginning to suffer from a feeling of inferiority to the exact scientist. It was felt that the mathematician was the man best qualified to philosophize. Those students of philosophy who had not come to philosophy from mathematics did their best (at least, in the university in which my studies were conducted) to try to become imitation mathematicians – at least to the extent of acquainting themselves with the paraphernalia of symbolic logic. (I remember one enthusiastic contemporary who devised a Symbolic Ethics, for which he had to invent several symbols not found in the *Principia Mathematica*.)[4] Beyond this, some familiarity with contemporary physics and with contemporary biology was also prized: a philosophical argument supported by illustrations from one of these sciences was more respectable than one which lacked them – even if the supporting evidence was sometimes irrelevant. Now I am quite aware that to the philosopher no field of knowledge should come amiss. The ideal philosopher would be at ease with every science, with every branch of art, with every language, and with the whole of human history. Such encyclopaedic knowledge might preserve him from excessive awe of those disciplines in which he was untrained, and excessive bias towards those in which he was well exercised. But in an age in which every branch of study becomes more subdivided and specialized, the ideal of omniscience is more and more remote from realization. Yet only omniscience is enough, once the philosopher begins to rely upon science. No one today, I imagine, would follow the example of Bosanquet, who in his *Logic* leant so heavily upon illustrations drawn from Linnaean Botany.[5] But while the philosopher's exploitation of science is now likely to meet with severe criticism, we are perhaps too ready to accept the conclusions of the scientist when he philosophizes.

One effect of this striving of philosophy towards the condition of the exact sciences was that it produced the illusion of a progress of philosophy, of a kind to which philosophy should not pretend. It turned out philosophical pedagogues ignorant, not merely of history in the general sense, but of the history of philosophy itself. If our attitude towards philosophy is influenced by an admiration for the exact sciences, then the philosophy of the past is something that has been superseded. It is punctuated by individual

philosophers, some of whom had moments of understanding, but whose work as a whole comes to be regarded as quaint and primitive. For the philosophy of the present, from this point of view, is altogether better than that of the past, when science was in its infancy; and the philosophy of the future will proceed from the discoveries of our own age. It is true that the history of philosophy is now admitted as a branch of study in itself, and that there are specialists in this subject: but I suspect that in the opinion of a philosopher of the modern school, the historian of philosophy is rather an historian than a philosopher.

The root cause of the vagaries of modern philosophy – and perhaps, though I was unconscious of it, the reason for my dissatisfaction with philosophy as a *profession* – I now believe to lie in the divorce of philosophy from theology. It is very necessary to anticipate the resistance to such an affirmation: a resistance springing from an immediate emotional response, and expressed by saying that any dependence of philosophy upon theology would be a limitation of the freedom of thought of the philosopher. It is necessary to make clear what one means by the necessary relation between philosophy and theology, and the implication in philosophy of some religious faith. This I shall not attempt, because it is done very much better by Josef Pieper: I desire only to call attention to this central point in his thought. He is himself a Catholic philosopher, grounded on Plato, Aristotle and the scholastics: and he makes his position quite clear to his readers.[6] But his writings do not constitute a Christian *apologetic* – that, in his view, is a task for the theologian. For him, a philosophy related to the theology of some other communion than that of Rome, or to that of some other religion than Christianity, would still be a genuine philosophy. It is significant that he pays a passing word of approval to the existentialism of Sartre, on the ground that he finds in it religious presuppositions – utterly different as they are from those which Dr. Pieper holds himself.[7]

The establishment of a right relation between philosophy and theology, which will leave the philosopher quite autonomous in his own area, is I think one of the most important lines of investigation which Dr. Pieper has pursued. In a more general way, his influence should be in the direction of restoring philosophy to a place of importance for every educated person who thinks, instead of confining it to esoteric activities which can affect the public only indirectly, insidiously and often in a distorted form. He restores to their position in philosophy what common sense obstinately tells us ought to be found there: *insight* and *wisdom*. By affirming the dependence of

philosophy upon revelation, and a proper respect for "the wisdom of the ancients," he puts the philosopher himself in a proper relation to other philosophers dead and living.[8] Two dangers to philosophy are thus averted. One is the conscious or unconscious imitation of exact science, the assumption that philosophers should be organized as teams of workers, like scientists in their laboratories, investigating various parts of a problem which is conceived as soluble in the same way as a problem in physics. The opposite error is that of an older and more romantic attitude, which produced what I may call the "one-man" philosophy: that is to say, a world view which was a projection of the personality of its author, a disguised imposition of his own temperament with all its emotional bias, upon the reader. I do not wish to diminish the grandeur or the value of the greatest one-man philosophies. When such a philosophy is done superbly well, as by Spinoza, it retains a permanent importance for humanity: for an acquaintance with Spinoza, and a temporary submission to his influence, is an experience of great value.[9] On the other hand, the colossal and grotesque achievement of Hegel may continue in concealed or derivative forms to exercise a fascination upon many minds.[10] I would mention also the work of such a writer as F. H. Bradley, which owes its persuasiveness to a masterly prose style.[11] The charm of the author's personality stimulates an agreeable state of feeling: and such books will continue to be read as literature, for the enlargement of our experience through a contact with powerful and individual minds.

Dr. Pieper also has style: however difficult his thought may sometimes be, his sentences are admirably constructed, his ideas expressed with the maximum clarity. But his mind is submissive to what he believes to be the great, the main tradition of European thought; his originality is subdued and unostentatious. And as he is a philosopher who accepts explicitly a dogmatic theology, his presuppositions are in full view, instead of being, as with some philosophers who profess complete detachment, concealed from both author and reader. The attitude towards philosophy which he maintains, and which distinguishes him from most of our contemporaries, is enough to account for his preference for expression in brief and concentrated essays rather than in constructions of greater bulk. Of such essays he has already published an impressive list: the two here presented are those which author, translator and publishers agreed upon as the most suitable introduction to his thought.[12]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Translation of *Muße und Kult* [*Leisure and Cult*] (1948) and *Was heißt philosophieren?* [*What Is the Meaning of Philosophizing?*] (1948) by the German philosopher Josef Pieper (1904-97). Pieper explained in his preface: "These two essays were published separately in Germany . . . They are intimately connected and properly belong together. This is not only true in the sense that they were both written in the same summer, . . . they both spring from the same thought" (19).

TSE had written to Pieper's translator Alexander Dru on 15 Mar 1950 that he had reread *Was heißt philosophieren?* and for the first time *Wahrheit der Dinge* [*Truth of Things*] (1947): "I remain much impressed by his work. I do think that some of it ought to be offered to the public in this country." When TSE informed Dru on 11 Sept 1950 that Faber had accepted the essays for book publication, he added that, if agreeable to Pieper, "I am ready to undertake some sort of preface after I get back from America." He wrote to Pieper on 16 Feb 1951: "I am waiting to re-read both essays in the proof of Alick Dru's translation, before writing my preface" (Marbach). TSE sent Pieper a copy of the preface on 22 May 1951; the volume was published on 25 Jan 1952.

2. In his sixth extension lecture on Modern French Literature, TSE wrote that in 1910 "Henri Bergson was then the most noticed figure in Paris" (1.475). In Jan and Feb 1911, TSE had attended Bergson's weekly lectures at the Collège de France and experienced, as he was to remark in his 1948 sermon at Cambridge, "a temporary conversion to Bergsonism" (7.112).

3. Logical Positivism (OED): "the name given to the theories and doctrines of philosophers active in Vienna in the early 1930s (the Vienna Circle), which were aimed at evolving in the language of philosophy formal methods for the verification of empirical questions similar to those of the mathematical sciences, and which therefore eliminated metaphysical and other more speculative questions as being logically ill-founded."

4. TSE attended Bertrand Russell's lectures at Harvard in the spring of 1914 entitled "Advanced Logic," in which he used the symbolic alphabet developed in *Principia Mathematica*. Brand Blanshard, a member of the class, recalled that Russell's "two best students were Eliot and Raphael Demos, who later became a Harvard professor. Not that Eliot took symbolic logic very seriously; 'it did not seem,' he said, 'to have anything to do with reality. But it gave me a sense of pleasure and power manipulating these curious little figures.'" "Eliot in Memory," *Yale Review* (Summer 1965), 637.

5. The Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707-78) is regarded as the founder of the modern classification of animals and plants. In his two-volume *Logic; or, The Morphology of Knowledge* (1888, revised 1911), which TSE marked and quoted in his doctoral dissertation (1.266), Bosanquet refers explicitly to Linnean classification only on five occasions, though he frequently draws on examples from botany to illustrate his points.

6. Pieper states in the "Author's Preface to the English Edition" that the philosophical act "must be understood in the traditional sense of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, and as they understood it" (20).

7. Pieper argues in "The Philosophical Act": "'Atheistical existentialism', writes Jean-Paul Sartre, 'concludes from the non-existence of God that there is a being which exists and is not defined by any higher will than its own: that being is man' – and nobody, surely, will accept that as a philosophical thesis and not as a theological thesis, an article of faith even. But it does force

thought and thinker on to the theological plane; and that is the type of counterpoint that makes for vital, vigorous philosophizing" (156-57).

8. "But Plato goes even further. Not only does he say that there is a tradition 'handed down by the ancients', which ought to be honoured by anyone who philosophizes. He is also convinced that the 'wisdom of the ancients' is ultimately of divine origin" (149-50).

9. TSE knew the work of Spinoza from his graduate studies at Harvard. His copy of Spinoza's *Ethics* (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, [1910]) is annotated and underlined (Houghton). In his review of *The Oldest Biography of Spinoza*, ed. A. Wolf, TSE wrote in 1927: "The figure of Spinoza has been almost more important in the last hundred years than the philosophy of Spinoza" and defined the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of his death as "the recognition not so much of a philosophy as of a personality in which certain human ideals seem to be realized" (3.56).

10. TSE wrote in *UPUC*: "I have read some of Hegel and Fichte . . . and forgotten it" (4.631), and later in his *Criterion* Commentary of Apr 1935: "I wish that I had taken Hegel more seriously in my youth, but like many people I was caught napping; I never expected that Hegel, having been inverted by a Jewish economist for his own purposes, should come back again into favour" (5.240).

11. TSE often praised Bradley's style, which he described as "the finest philosophic style in our language" in his *Criterion* Commentary of Oct 1924 (2.540) and acknowledged the influence it exerted on his own prose style on several occasions throughout his writings.

12. In his letter to Pieper of 18 July 1950, TSE wrote that "the essays which seemed to me suitable to form the first book to be made, are *Wahrheit der Dinge*, *Muße und Kult* and *Was heißt Philosophieren*. I am discussing these matters with Alick Dru, and am sending him *Wahrheit der Dinge*, which he has not seen. This struck me as a particularly important and impressive essay" (Marbach). He informed Pieper on 12 Sept that "my Board have now agreed to publish the two essays in one volume, without insisting on enlarging the book by the addition of a third" (Marbach). Faber continued to publish English translations of several of Pieper's works.

The Origin of Species

To the Editor of *Time and Tide*

Time and Tide, 33 (2 Feb 1952) 108

Sir, – In his rejoinder to Diogenes, the Reverend Sir Percy Maryon-Wilson asks two questions which appear to depend, for eliciting the answer which he expects, upon the reader's emotional response to the word *privilege*. Those who can be trusted to react favourably to the phrase "social justice," without stopping to enquire what it implies in any particular context, can also be trusted to react unfavourably to the word *privilege*.[1] But for those who maintain – and I believe it to be a tenable thesis – that responsibility and privilege cannot be wholly dissociated without damage to responsibility, and that responsibility equally diffused among the population may lead merely to a universal irresponsibility, the question may suggest another answer.

Another word, the emotional associations of which operate to produce the answer which Fr Maryon-Wilson expects, is the word *squire*. The squire is almost as unpopular (for political purposes) and almost as extinct, as the wicked baronet.[2] But when the question is put: "how far were the virtues of the squire dependent upon a tenantry which was dependent upon *him*?" may we not ask in return: "how far are the virtues of the parent dependent upon children who are dependent upon him (and her)?" or even: "how far the virtues of the parish priest dependent upon parishioners who are dependent upon *him*?"

Such questions seem to me more relevant to Diogenes' commentary than are the aspirations of Miss Bondfield to the actual achievements of Socialism.[3]

I am, etc.,

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In his letter to the editor titled "The Aristocratic Tradition," in the issue of 26 Jan, Sir George Percy Maryon Maryon-Wilson (1898-1965), Vicar of Christ Church Rectory, St. Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex, states: "'We have passed,' writes Diogenes, 'in the course of one lifetime from a situation in which the State cared little for the individual to a situation in which the individual cares little for the State.'" He then goes on to ask: "But what is, or was, the aristocratic tradition? Was it not largely the product of an economically secure social class in which a sense of responsibility had been fostered by long-inherited knowledge of its own privileges?" (84).

Diogenes is the pseudonym of William John Brown (1894-1960), trade unionist and former independent MP for Rugby, who regularly contributed articles to *Time and Tide* in the 1950s. Maryon-Wilson became TSE's confessor in 1932.

2. The squire was a country landed proprietor, with a manor house and tenant farmers. The baronetcy is the lowest hereditary titled order, ranking below a baron and without privilege.

3. Margaret Grace Bondfield (1873-1953) was a trade unionist and Labour minister. Maryon-Wilson quotes from Bondfield's autobiographical volume *A Life's Work* (1949) at the end of his letter: "The Socialism I preached . . . was a method of bringing the united power of Society to the help of the poor and the weak, who needed it to level them up to normal, but always also to raise the normal standard higher. It was never a method of giving anybody a good time."

Preface to *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties towards Mankind*, by Simone Weil; trans. Arthur Wills

London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1952. Pp. xv + 288; Preface, v-xii.[1]

The only kind of introduction which could merit permanent association with a book by Simone Weil would be – like that provided by M. Gustave Thibon to *Gravity and Grace*[2]* – an introduction by someone who knew her. The reader of her work finds himself confronted by a difficult, violent and complex personality; and the assistance of those who had the advantage of long discussions or correspondence with her, especially those who knew her under the peculiar conditions of the last five years of her life, will be of permanent value in the future. I lack these qualifications. My aims in writing this preface are, first, to affirm my belief in the importance of the author and of this particular book; second, to warn the reader against premature judgment and summary classification – to persuade him to hold in check his own prejudices and at the same time to be patient with those of Simone Weil. Once her work is known and accepted, such a preface as this should become superfluous.

All of Simone Weil's work is posthumous.[3] *Gravity and Grace* – the selection from her voluminous notebooks made by M. Thibon, and the first volume to appear in France – is admirable in its contents, but somewhat deceptive in its form. The comparison with Pascal (a writer of whom Simone Weil sometimes spoke with asperity) may be pressed too far.[4] The fragmentariness of the extracts elicits the profound insights and the startling originality, but suggests that hers was a mind of occasional flashes of inspiration. After reading *Waiting on God* [5]* and the present volume I saw that I must try to understand the personality of the author; and that the reading and re-reading of all of her work was necessary for this slow process of understanding. In trying to understand her, we must not be distracted – as is only too likely to happen on a first reading – by considering how far, and at what points, we agree or disagree. We must simply expose ourselves to the personality of a woman of genius, of a kind of genius akin to that of the saints.

Perhaps "genius" is not the right word. The only priest with whom she ever discussed her belief and her doubts has said: *je crois que son âme est incomparablement plus haute que son génie*.[6] That is another way of indicating that our first experience of Simone Weil should not be expressible in terms of approval or dissent. I cannot conceive of anybody's agreeing with all of her views, or of not disagreeing violently with some of them. But agreement and rejection are secondary: what matters is to make contact with a great soul. Simone Weil was one who might have become a saint. Like some who have achieved this state, she had greater obstacles to overcome, as well as greater strength for overcoming them, than the rest of us. A potential saint can be a very difficult person: I suspect that Simone Weil could be at times insupportable. One is struck, here and there, by a contrast between an almost superhuman humility and what appears to be an almost outrageous arrogance. There is a significant sentence by the French priest whom I have already quoted. He reports that he does not remember "ever having heard Simone Weil, in spite of her virtuous desire for objectivity, give way in the course of a discussion."[7] This comment throws light on much of her published work. I do not believe that she was ever animated by delight in her own forensic skill – a self-indulgence to which I suspect Pascal came dangerously near, in the *Letters* – the display of power in overcoming others in controversy.[8] It was rather that all her thought was so intensely lived, that the abandonment of any opinion required modifications in her whole being: a process which could not take place painlessly, or in the course of a conversation. And – especially in the young, and in those like Simone Weil in whom one detects no sense of humour – egotism and selflessness can resemble each other so closely that we may mistake the one for the other.

The statement that Simone Weil's "soul was incomparably superior to her genius" will, however, be misunderstood if it gives the impression of depreciating her intellect. Certainly she could be unfair and intemperate; certainly she committed some astonishing aberrations and exaggerations. But those immoderate affirmations which tax the patience of the reader spring not from any flaw in her intellect but from excess of temperament. She came of a family with no lack of intellectual endowment – her brother is a distinguished mathematician;[9] and as for her own mind, it was worthy of the soul which employed it. But the intellect, especially when bent upon such problems as those which harassed Simone Weil, can come to maturity only slowly; and we must not forget that Simone Weil died at the age of thirty-three.[10] I think that in *The Need for Roots* especially, the maturity of her social and

political thought is very remarkable. But she had a very great soul to grow up to; and we should not criticise her philosophy at thirty-three as if it were that of a person twenty or thirty years older.

In the work of such a writer we must expect to encounter paradox. Simone Weil was three things in the highest degree: French, Jewish and Christian. She was a patriot who would gladly have been sent back to France to suffer and die for her compatriots: she had to die – partly, it would seem, as the result of self-mortification, in refusing to take more food than the official rations of ordinary people in France – in 1943 in a sanatorium at Ashford, Kent. She was also a patriot who saw clearly, as this book shows, the faults and the spiritual weakness of contemporary France. She was a Christian with an intense devotion to Our Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar, yet she refused baptism, and much of her writing constitutes a formidable criticism of the Church.[11] She was intensely Jewish, suffering torments in the affliction of the Jews in Germany; yet she castigated Israel[12*] with all the severity of a Hebrew Prophet.[13] Prophets, we are told, were stoned in Jerusalem: but Simone Weil is exposed to lapidation from several quarters. And in her political thinking she appears as a stern critic of both Right and Left; at the same time more truly a lover of order and hierarchy than most of those who call themselves Conservative, and more truly a lover of the people than most of those who call themselves Socialist.

As for her attitude towards the Church of Rome and her attitude towards Israel I wish, in the space of a preface, to make only one observation. The two attitudes are not only compatible but coherent, and should be considered as one. It was in fact her rejection of Israel that made her a very heterodox Christian. In her repudiation of all but a few parts of the Old Testament (and in what she accepted she discerned traces of Chaldaean or Egyptian influence) she falls into something very like the Marcionite heresy.[14] In denying the divine mission of Israel she is also rejecting the foundation of the Christian Church. Hence the difficulties that caused her so much agony of spirit. I must affirm that there is no trace of the Protestant in her composition: for her, the Christian Church could only be the Church of Rome. In the Church there is much to which she is blind, or about which she is strangely silent: she seems to give no thought to the Blessed Virgin; and as for the Saints, she is concerned only with those who attract her interest through their writings – such as St. Thomas Aquinas (whom she dislikes, perhaps on insufficient acquaintance) and St. John of the Cross (whom she admires because of his profound knowledge of spiritual method).[15]

In one respect she has, at first sight, something in common with those intellectuals of the present day (mostly with a vague liberal Protestant background) who can find their way towards the religious life only through the mysticism of the East. Her enthusiasm for everything Greek (including the mysteries) was unbounded. For her, there was no revelation to Israel, but a good deal of revelation to the Chaldaeans, the Egyptians and the Hindus.[16] Her attitude may appear to be dangerously close to that of those universalists who maintain that the ultimate and esoteric truth is one, that all religions show some traces of it, and that it is a matter of indifference to which one of the great religions we adhere. Yet she is saved from this error – and this is a matter for admiration and thankfulness – by her devotion to the person of Our Lord.

In her criticism of the Jewish and the Christian faiths, I think that we have to try to make for ourselves a threefold distinction, asking ourselves: how much is just? how much is serious objection that must be rebutted? and how much, in the way of error, can be extenuated on the ground of the immaturity of a superior and passionate personality? Our analyses may differ widely: but we must ask and answer these questions for ourselves.

I do not know how good a Greek scholar she was. I do not know how well read she was in the history of the civilisations of the Eastern Mediterranean. I do not know whether she could read the Upanishads in Sanskrit;[17] or, if so, how great was her mastery of what is not only a very highly developed language but a way of thought the difficulties of which only become more formidable to a European student the more diligently he applies himself to it. But I do not think that she shows, in this field, the mind of an historian. In her adulation of Greece, and of the "wisdom of the East," as in her disparagement of Rome and Israel, she seems to me almost wilful. In one quarter she sees only what she can admire; in another, she repudiates without discrimination. Because she dislikes the Roman Empire, she dislikes Virgil.[18] Her admirations, when not motivated by her dislikes, seem to be at least intensified by them. One may sympathise with her horror at the brutalities of expanding or imperialistic peoples (as the Romans in Europe and the Spanish in America) in crushing local civilisations. But when, in order to enhance her denunciation of the Romans, she attempts to make out a case for the culture of the Druids, we do not feel that our meagre knowledge of that vanished society gives any ground for her conjectures.[19] We can share her revulsion from the atrocities committed in the suppression of the Albigensian heresy, and yet speculate whether the peculiar

civilisation of Provence had not come to the end of its productivity.[20] Would the world be a better place to-day if there were half a dozen different cultures flourishing between the English Channel and the Mediterranean, instead of the one which we know as France? Simone Weil begins with an insight; but the logic of her emotions can lead her to make generalisations so large as to be meaningless. We may protest that we are so completely in the dark as to what the world would be like now if events had taken a different course, that such a question as that whether the latinisation of Western Europe by Roman conquest was a good or bad thing is unanswerable. Her flights of fancy of this kind must not, however, be taken as invalidating her fundamental concept of *rootedness*, and her warnings against the evils of an over-centralised society.

This book was written during the last year or so of Simone Weil's life, during her employment at French Headquarters in London;[21] and it issues, I understand, from memoranda which she submitted in connexion with the policy to be pursued after the Liberation. The problems of the moment led her to much larger considerations; but even those pages in which she is concerned with the programme to be followed by the Free French during the war and immediately after the Liberation show such foresight and maturity of judgment that they are of permanent value.[22] This is, I think, among those works of hers already published, the one which approximates most closely to the form in which she might herself have chosen to release it.

I have dwelt chiefly upon certain ideas which are to be met with in all her writings, with some emphasis upon her errors and exaggerations. I have taken this course in the belief that many readers, coming for the first time upon some assertion likely to arouse intellectual incredulity or emotional antagonism, might be deterred from improving their acquaintance with a great soul and a brilliant mind. Simone Weil needs patience from her readers, as she doubtless needed patience from the friends who most admired and appreciated her. But in spite of the violence of her affections and antipathies, in spite of such unjustified generalisations as I have instanced, I find in the present book especially a balanced judgment, a wisdom in avoiding extremes, astonishing in anyone so young. It may be that in her conversations with Gustave Thibon she profited more than she knew from her contact with that wise and well-balanced mind.

As a political thinker, as in everything else, Simone Weil is not to be classified. The paradoxicality of her sympathies is a contributing cause of the

equilibrium. On the one hand she was a passionate champion of the common people and especially of the oppressed – those oppressed by the wickedness and selfishness of men and those oppressed by the anonymous forces of modern society. She had worked in the Renault factory, she had worked as a field labourer, in order to share the life of people of town and country.[23] On the other hand, she was by nature a solitary and an individualist, with a profound horror of what she called the *collectivity* – the monster created by modern totalitarianism.[24] What she cared about was human souls. Her study of human rights and human obligations exposes the falsity of some of the verbiage still current which was used during the war to serve as a moral stimulant. Not the least striking example of her shrewdness, balance and good sense is her examination of the principle of monarchy;[25] and her short review of the political history of France is at once a condemnation of the French Revolution and a powerful argument against the possibility of a restoration of the kingship.[26] She cannot be classified either as a reactionary or as a socialist.

This book belongs in that category of prolegomena to politics which politicians seldom read, and which most of them would be unlikely to understand or to know how to apply. Such books do not influence the contemporary conduct of affairs: for the men and women already engaged in this career and committed to the jargon of the market-place, they always come too late. This is one of those books which ought to be studied by the young before their leisure has been lost[27] and their capacity for thought destroyed in the life of the hustings and the legislative assembly; books the effect of which, we can only hope, will become apparent in the attitude of mind of another generation.

T. S. ELIOT

September 1951

NOTES

1. Simone Weil's *L'Enracinement* was first published in French in 1949; Wills's translation appeared on 7 Mar 1952, with TSE's preface dated "*September 1951*" under his signature. Urged to review the book by Herbert Read and Frank Morley, TSE wrote hesitantly to Read on 21 Mar 1951: "I might be able to take time out to introduce Simone in the autumn (I mean, get to work on her in the summer). But I don't know that you and the New York people want to wait that long. If I could think of anyone else suitable for the job, I would certainly urge your asking him. Secondly, a preface or introduction to a book by Simone is about the most serious job of the kind that one could undertake. One is so impressed by this terrifying woman that one wants to do something that at least would not risk her disapproval of it" (Victoria).

The TS of the introduction is in King's (H2q); three sets of page proofs are in P39c: one inscribed "Proof to J. H. from T. S. E. 7.xi.51," profusely corrected by John Hayward; the other inscribed "Corrected T. S. Eliot 7.xi.51"; and the third one with a covering pencil note from TSE to Hayward dated 24 Dec 1951.

2*. TSE's note: "*La Pesanteur et la Grâce* [Paris: Plon, 1950]." TSE read the book, first published in 1947, during his holiday in South Africa. When invited by the *Sunday Times* to contribute to "Books of the Year Chosen by Eminent Contemporaries," TSE wrote in Dec 1950: "A book edited by Gustave Thibon, *La Pesanteur et la grâce*, by the late Simone Weil, is almost too important to be included in one's list of reading for one year only" (7.576); he had previously quoted from Thibon's introduction in "The Aims of Education 2" (7.536).

3. In fact, Weil published some poems and articles under the pseudonym Émile Novis in *Les Cahiers du Sud*, as stated in Thibon's introduction (vi). Her essay "La vie et la grève des ouvrières métallos" [The Life and Strike of Metalworkers] appeared in the journal *La Révolution prolétarienne* on 10 June 1936 under the pseudonym Simone Galois. TSE derived much of his biographical information on Weil from Thibon's introduction.

4. Thibon states in his introduction: "Il ne faut pas oublier en effet qu'il s'agit ici, comme chez Pascal, de simples pierres d'attente, posées au jour le jour et souvent en hâte, en vue d'une construction plus complète qui ne vit, hélas! jamais le jour" (xii). *Trans*: We must not forget, in fact, that we are concerned here, as in Pascal's case, with simple stepping stones, laid from day to day and often in haste, with a view to a more complete construction which, alas, never saw the light of day!

The presentation of *La Pesanteur et la Grâce* as a series of fragments and aphorisms invited comparison with Pascal's *Pensées*. Weil accused Pascal of having been "guilty of lack of probity in his search for God. Having had his mind formed by the practice of science, he didn't dare hope that by allowing it full play it would find certitude in the Christian dogma. He didn't dare run the risk either of having to do without Christianity. So he undertook an intellectual research having decided beforehand where it was to lead him" (*The Need for Roots*, 238).

5*. TSE's note: "*Attente de Dieu* [Paris: La Colombe, 1950]."

6. *Trans*: I believe that her soul is incomparably superior to her genius. Father Joseph-Marie (born Michel) Perrin (1905-2002), a Dominican priest based in Marseille whose friendship had a profound impact on Weil's spiritual development, made this statement in his introduction to Weil's *Attente de Dieu* (8-9).

7. "Je ne me souviens pas avoir vu Simone Weil céder pendant une discussion, malgré son désir vertueux d'objectivité" (J.-M. Perrin, Introduction to *Attente de Dieu*, 12-13).

8. In his introduction to Pascal's *Pensées* (1931) TSE discussed *Les Provinciales* (*Provincial Letters*) (1656-57), "which as prose are of capital importance in the foundation of French classical style, and which as polemic are surpassed by none, not by Demosthenes, or Cicero, or Swift. They have the limitation of all polemic and forensic: they persuade, they seduce, they are unfair" (4.341).

9. Simone's brother, the mathematician André Weil (1906-98), made significant contributions in the fields of algebra, number theory, algebraic geometry, and differential geometry. He taught at the Universities of São Paulo and Chicago before settling at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton in 1958, where he remained until his retirement in 1976.

10. She was in fact thirty-four.

11. Weil writes in *Attente de Dieu*: "Je suis toujours demeurée sur ce point précis, au seuil de l'Église, sans bouger, immobile, ἐν ὑπομένῃ (c'est un mot tellement plus beau que *patientia*!); seulement maintenant mon cœur a été transporté, pour toujours, j'espère, dans le Saint-Sacrement exposé sur l'autel" (83). *Trans*: "I have always remained at this exact point, on the threshold of the Church, without moving, quite still ἐν ὑπομένῃ (it is so much more beautiful a word than *patientia*!); only now my heart has been transported, for ever, I hope, into the Blessed Sacrament exposed on the altar." *Waiting on God*, trans. Emma Craufurd (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1951), 27.

12*. TSE's note: "I use the term 'Israel' as she used it, and not, of course, with reference to the modern State."

13. "La malédiction d'Israël pèse sur la chrétienté. Les atrocités, l'Inquisition, les exterminations d'hérétiques et d'infidèles, c'était Israël. Le capitalisme, c'était Israël (ce l'est encore dans une certaine mesure . . .). Le totalitarisme, c'est Israël, notamment chez ses pires ennemis" (*La Pesanteur et la Grâce*, 190). *Trans*: The curse of Israel weighs on Christianity. The atrocities, the Inquisition, the exterminations of heretics and infidels, it was Israel. Capitalism, it was Israel (it still is to a certain extent . . .). Totalitarianism, it is Israel, especially with regard to its worst enemies.

14. For the Marcionite heresy and its rejection of the authority of the Old and New Testaments, see 7.192, n.7.

15. Weil argues in *The Need for Roots*: "St. Thomas Aquinas, although he didn't approve of slavery, looked upon Aristotle as the greatest authority on all subjects of study accessible to human reason, amongst which is justice. Consequently, the existence in contemporary Christianity of a Thomistic current constitutes a bond of complicity – amongst many others, unfortunately – between the Nazis and their adversaries" (232-33). But she expresses her admiration for St. John of the Cross: "The supreme and perfect state of mystical contemplation is something that is infinitely more mysterious still, and yet St. John of the Cross wrote treatises on the method of attaining to such a state, which, by their scientific precision, are far and away superior to anything produced by the psychologists or professors of our own time" (180).

16. Weil writes in *Attente de Dieu*: "Daniel, le premier en date parmi les Hébreux dont l'histoire ne soit pas souillée par quelque trait atroce, fut initié dans l'exil à la sagesse chaldéenne et fut l'ami des rois mèdes et perses. . . . Pendant l'exil aussi la notion du juste souffrant, venue de Grèce, d'Égypte ou d'ailleurs, s'infiltra dans Israël. Plus tard l'hellénisme submergea un moment la Palestine. Grâce à tout cela le Christ put avoir des disciples" (230-31). *Trans*: "Daniel, the first in date among the Hebrews whose story is not sullied by some heinous feature, was initiated in the wisdom of the Chaldeans during his exile and was a friend of the kings of the Medes and Persians. . . . Also during the exile the idea of the righteous sufferer crept into Jewish thought, coming from either Greece, Egypt or elsewhere. Later on, a wave of Hellenism swept over Palestine for a space. Thanks to all these influences, Christ was able to have some disciples" (164).

17. Settled with her parents in Marseille from Sept 1940 until May 1942, Weil studied Sanskrit and its principal texts, the Vedas and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Her notebooks contain transcriptions of lines in Sanskrit with parallel transliterations often accompanied by translations.

18. In *La Pesanteur et la Grâce*, Weil defines Rome as "le gros animal athée, matérialiste, n'adorant que soi" [the great atheist beast, materialistic, worshipping only itself] (185). In *The Need for Roots*, she draws a parallel between Virgil's relationship with Augustus and the Duke of Este's patronage of Ariosto when criticizing their poems as being the result of a "commercial

transaction," adding that poetry "is not something for sale. God would be unjust if the *Aeneid*, which was composed under these conditions, were worth as much as the *Iliad*. But God is not unjust, and the *Aeneid* is very far indeed from being on an equality with the *Iliad*" (223).

19. "Diogenes Laërtius says that a tradition attributed several foreign origins to Greek wisdom, and amongst others the Druids of Gaul. Other texts indicate that the thought of the Druids was related to that of the Pythagoreans. // Thus this people possessed a whole ocean of sacred poetry whose inspiration we are only able to form some idea of through the works of Plato. // All that disappeared when the Romans wiped out the entire collection of Druids for being guilty of the crime of patriotism" (*The Need for Roots*, 212-13).

20. The Albigensian Crusade (1209-29) was initiated in southern France by the Catholic Church to eradicate Catharism, a Christian sect professing a theology of dualism and asceticism. Weil believed that "French thought has been more enriched by the Albigenses and troubadours of the twelfth century, who were not Frenchmen, than by the entire output from this part of France in the course of succeeding centuries" (*The Need for Roots*, 102).

21. After a trip to the United States in May 1942, Weil traveled to London where she joined the French Resistance. She died in a sanatorium in Ashford, Kent on 24 Aug 1943.

22. This program is outlined in the final chapter, "The Growing of Roots."

23. In 1934, Weil worked as a laborer for a year in two factories, one owned by Renault, as a way of connecting with the working class. When Paris was declared an "open city" in June 1940, Weil fled with her family to Marseille in Sept. Here she met Father Perrin, who, on learning of her desire to work as a field hand, sent her to the farmer and philosopher Gustave Thibon. Weil stayed with Thibon and his family in the Ardèche until May 1942.

24. The "Great Beast" of collectivity is seen by Weil as a threat to intellectual freedom, as it devours souls and makes people unable to think independently. She states in *La Pesanteur et la Grâce*: "Le capitalisme a réalisé l'affranchissement de la collectivité humaine par rapport à la nature. Mais cette collectivité a pris par rapport à l'individu la succession de la fonction oppressive exercée auparavant par la nature" (177). *Trans*: Capitalism has effected the emancipation of human collectivity with regard to nature. But this collectivity has assumed in relation to the individual the oppressive function previously exercised by nature.

25. See pp. 260-61

26. This is discussed in the chapter "Uprootedness and Nationhood," especially on pp. 98-118.

27. TSE had recently finished writing his preface to Pieper's *Leisure the Basis of Culture* (7.654).

Good Going

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (8 Mar 1952) 7

Sir, – Having been a schoolboy in America a good many years before Sir Charles Jeffries was a schoolboy in this country,[1] I remember a very successful "musical" called *The Red Mill*, in which one of the lyrical numbers ran somewhat as follows: –

> Always go while the goin' is good
> And the goin' looks good to you;
> For if you play the ponies every day
> You'll know exactly what to do.
> For a gamblin' gent wants 10 per cent –
> That's a fact that's understood:
> So cash right in just the minute you win
> And go while the goin' is good.[2]

This was in 1906, but by that date the phrase in question was already well established in American colloquial speech.[3]

Yours faithfully,

T. S. ELIOT[4†]

24, Russell Square, W.C.1.

NOTES

1. The letter by Sir Charles Joseph Jeffries (1896-1972) to the editor of the *Times* of 4 Mar was prompted by a leading article in the *Times* of 25 Feb on Jeannette Altwegg's decision to retire from figure skating, which began: "No one knows, perhaps, who first gave the advice to go while the going is good" (7). Jeffries ventured to offer a possible source for this expression in the following lines from Irving Berlin's lyric "The Fox-Trot Ball," which he quotes "from schoolboy memory": "When I hear that melodee / A funny feeling comes o'er me: / I gotta keep on going while the going's good / At the fox-trot ball – that's all" (7).

2. TSE misquotes from memory *The Red Mill*, an operetta by Victor Herbert with a libretto by Henry Blossom. First performed on Broadway on 24 Sept 1906, it ran until May 1907. "Go While the Goin' Is Good" is the seventh musical number in the first act. The second and final part reads: "Always go while the goin' is good, dont wait to even say adoo! – for if you stay there is only one way, they're bound to put a crimp in you. That a gamblin' gent has a large percent is a

fact that is understood! – So cash right in just the minute you win and go while the goin' is good!" *The Red Mill: A Musical Comedy* (New York; Chicago: M. Witmark & Sons, 1906), 50-51.

3. The first recorded instance of this idiom in the OED is from the *Observer and Telegraph*, Hudson, Ohio (25 Nov 1830): "The American Bible Society should . . . lose no time this autumn while the going is good and the weather mild, in putting the sacred treasure into the last destitute family within their limits."

4†. Signed by pseudonym "METOIKOS" (Greek: resident alien), inserted by Valerie Fletcher on the carbon copy; previously used in signature to "Full Employment and the Responsibility of Christians" (1945) (6.601).

Dossier on *Murder in the Cathedral*: Playwright Presents Both an Evaluation and Appreciation of the Film Version

New York Times, New York (23 Mar 1952) Part II, 5

LONDON.

So many years have passed since the idea of making a film of my play, *Murder in the Cathedral*, was conceived in the brain of George Hoellering that I cannot remember when our conversations on the subject began. It was in the middle of the war, in 1941 or 1942, that we were brought together by a mutual friend.[1]

Hoellering's first problem was how to convert me to believing that his idea was realizable and worth realizing – and even then I said to myself: "I don't believe that it can be satisfactorily done; but unless I agree to make this experiment I shall never know whether it is possible." Besides, I wanted to find out how films were made. So I should not regret the experience, even were the film, which has resulted, not the masterpiece which I believe it to be.

I expected the first discussions to be concerned with casting; instead, I found that my director postponed that problem to a very late stage. Instead, he began by fabricating on hand-looms (which had to be constructed for the purpose) the material for costumes, such as were used in the twelfth century.

I was, and still am, amazed by the infinite pains he took for historical accuracy in costume, furniture and setting. This was the first difference to strike me: on the stage minor anachronisms can be ignored or forgiven – but not in a film. In other words, the picture, though it can also produce effects of fantasy impossible on the stage, is also very much more realistic. When it introduces fantasy, it is a realistic fantasy.

Again, I had expected that much of the photographing would be done on location at Canterbury Cathedral (for which the permission of the Dean and Chapter had been given), using the crypt and any other parts of the cathedral where Norman architecture remained. I now see that even the original Norman parts of the cathedral would have been anachronistic. The cathedral

had to look as it did in 1170, when it was still new. Stone-work after nearly 800 years shows signs of wear and tear. And I believe that some electric lighting had been installed, which even the most ignorant film-goer could hardly have accepted as twelfth-century work. It was much more satisfactory to fabricate sets inside a disused war-damaged church in London.

Hoellering imposed two tasks upon me. (Indeed, in spite of my very secondary role in the creation of the film, I found myself, first and last, doing a great deal more work than I had bargained for.) The first was to write the preliminary scenes, especially that of the "trial" at Northampton.[2] Here, he met with a great deal of resistance. I was used to the shape of my play, and didn't want to change it. I agreed rather grudgingly, thinking that I was being asked to make a concession to that part of the film audience that didn't know the historical story.

I came to see that these additional scenes are necessary for any audience; that it is not a question of film audience being different from stage audience, but rather a question of the same audience under the different conditions of stage and screen. On the screen, much more has to be explained. Plot, and form, are different things for stage and screen.

My second important task – I think both of these were performed in the bitter winter of 1945-46 – was to record the whole play (including the new additions) in my own voice.[3] This, Hoellering explained, was to serve as a guide to his actors, not for dramatic expression, but for pronunciation and preservation of the verse rhythms. Only Mr. Hoellering himself can say how useful this recording proved. But if this was useful for the film, it strikes me that such recordings might prove helpful also to producers of stage plays in verse. One consequence, unexpected to me, of this recording, was that it suggested to him the use of my voice for the Invisible Tempter. I may observe that my being cast for the Invisible Tempter constituted my third task and that by no means the least arduous.

Now, there is one question to which I think there is no answer. It is the question: Do I think that *Murder in the Cathedral* is better as a play or as a film? I don't think the question has any meaning. But there are two other questions to which I can give answers. First, in what way, if any, is the text of the film an improvement on that of the play? And, in what ways has the film an advantage, for this play, over the stage?

In the first place, the film assures, what the stage cannot, maximal clarity of diction and complete audibility throughout the house. In the second

place, it opens up much larger possibilities for variation in the use of the chorus at the same time more realistic and more nightmarish. It is evident in the film, as not always in the theatre, that the chorus is not a Greek chorus of commentators, but is much more closely implicated in the action. Thirdly, the film gains, I think, by being played straight through without the intermission which is inevitable in the theatre.

Finally, there was the difficult problem of the Knight's speeches. These speeches were of course designed to be addressed to the audience: if they were addressed to a stage crowd, they would become completely pointless. But, even if such long harangues to the audience could be provided with suitable photography, they would, in a film, take us away from the scene of the murder far too long, and would break the illusion of being eye-witnesses of the actual event, which it is the business of the camera to create. The speeches therefore had to be considerably abbreviated and modified, to be addressed to the twelfth century crowd, and the moment of address to the audience (and without this address to the audience the play loses its whole point) had to be made as brief, as concentrated, and of as violent an impact as possible.

I think that this is an improvement, in that the meaning is made clear beyond a shadow of doubt. And I think that if I were to re-write the play (but nothing is less likely) I should here follow the lines which Hoellering and the film medium itself imposed upon me, rather than retain the original speeches.

It is generally assumed that in the film, the only value of the words you hear is that they should help you to understand what you see. That is to say, that the spoken word in the film is merely an improvement upon the captions of the silent film. In this film I find that my words gain, instead of losing value.

Hoellering understands poetic drama from the author's point of view, and that is an exceptional good fortune for me. I have, I believe, made some progress in understanding and appreciating the possibilities of poetic drama from the film director's point of view. We survived these years of preparation without any violent quarrels. My only complaint is that he has been so scrupulous to avoid doing anything I didn't like, that he has made me do much more work myself than I would have been obliged to do for anyone else.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE was introduced to George Hoellering by Herbert Read in Apr 1942. The film *Murder in the Cathedral* was presented at the Venice Film Festival on 2 Sept 1951 and released in the United Kingdom in Mar 1952. The "complete scenario" of the revised and expanded script was published as *The Film of Murder in the Cathedral*, with TSE's preface, in Apr 1952 (7.717). An editorial heading in the *New York Times* explains: "The adaptation of Mr. Eliot's play, *Murder in the Cathedral* is slated to open at the Sixtieth Street Trans-Lux on Tuesday." The production was reviewed by Bosley Crowther in the issue of 26 Mar (35).

2. The screenplay opens with the Archbishop of Canterbury being summoned by the King to a great council at Northampton Castle to face accusations of contempt of royal authority. *The Film of Murder in the Cathedral* (London: Faber, 1952), 17-33.

3. TSE wrote to Mary Trevelyan on 29 Jan 1945 about "recording Murder with Mr. Hoellering, who wants it for training his actors with."

Le Dilemme poétique [Charybde et Scylla][1]

Mes ouvrages en prose ou en vers ont peut-être quelquefois surpris mes lecteurs : je n'en sais rien. Mais je sais que, quand je les regardais une fois finis, ils m'ont toujours surpris moi-même.[2] Bien souvent, mes idées, celles qui me semblaient les plus intéressantes ou les plus originales, une fois mises en mots et disposées dans leur ordre définitif, se sont révélées comme des idées que je ne savais pas être les miennes. On croit généralement qu'un écrivain sait exactement ce qu'il veut dire avant de s'asseoir à sa table de travail, et que tout le travail qui vient après consiste simplement à choisir les mots les plus adéquats, les phrases les mieux tournées et la disposition la meilleure possible. Mais j'ai toujours trouvé que, une fois écrit, ce qui me plaisait au moins, était quelque chose de différent de ce que j'avais pensé devoir écrire. C'est que peut-être je ne sais jamais très bien ce que je veux dire avant de l'avoir dit. Que j'aie entrepris une tâche particulière spontanément, ou qu'elle m'ait été donnée par les circonstances, l'élément d'inattendu joue toujours un grand rôle.

Lorsque j'essaie d'écrire un poème, je me trouve fréquemment dans la position du navigateur homérique entre deux écueils. On croit généralement que le poète, plus que quiconque, est un esprit à la recherche perpétuelle *du mot juste*. Mais je décrirai plus précisément ce qui m'arrive comme une tentative d'éviter *le mot impropre*. Quant au mot juste, je suis assez convaincu que ce n'est qu'un mirage. Je vais chercher à justifier mon opinion.

Prenons d'abord le problème dans sa forme la plus simple. Un *mot* peut être juste d'un certain point de vue et ne pas l'être d'un autre. La valeur *poétique*, *l'essence* poétique si je puis dire, d'un passage en vers, dépend de trois choses : le sens littéral du mot, les associations d'idées qu'il éveille et le son du mot.

Le mot qui a le sens exact que vous désirez peut être très loin de sonner comme il faut dans le contexte des mots parmi lesquels il doit se placer. Le mot qui sonne comme il faudrait à cet endroit, peut ne pas vouloir dire exactement ce que vous désirez qu'il dise. D'un côté comme de l'autre, c'est le naufrage. Si le mot rend un son faux, la surface du poème est troublée ; et si le sens du mot est impropre, alors le poème ne résistera pas à l'examen. Dans un cas, comme dans l'autre ce n'est pas de la poésie. Pour illustrer

brièvement et efficacement ce simple dilemme, il me faudrait trouver des exemples en français ; mais peu de gens, et certainement je ne suis pas de ceux-là, ont une connaissance assez intime d'une autre langue que la leur, et sont assez sûrs d'eux-mêmes pour y choisir leurs exemples. Un problème insoluble devant lequel je me suis trouvé dans mon œuvre suffira, car il n'est pas besoin que je cite le vers anglais. Dans un de mes poèmes *The Dry Salvages*, je fus amené à décrire la sorte de débris qu'on trouve sur une plage et, entre autres choses, la coquille d'une espèce très particulière de crabe. En relisant le poème quelque temps après la publication du texte définitif, je fus horrifié de constater que je m'étais trompé de nom pour ce crabe. J'avais parlé du crabe *bernard-l'hermite* qui n'a pas de coquille à lui, mais qui se sert comme habitation de la coquille d'autres crustacés morts. N'ayant pas de coquille particulière, le bernard-l'hermite ne pouvait guère être identifié par une coquille trouvée sur la plage ; et en fait, je ne suis pas sûr d'avoir jamais vu un bernard-l'hermite. Le genre de crabe auquel j'avais pensé était le *horse-shoe crab* (fer à cheval). Je connaissais parfaitement la différence. Comment se faisait-il qu'après avoir passé des mois à travailler et à réviser ce poème, je n'avais par remarqué que j'avais associé tout le temps le nom d'un genre de crabe avec l'image d'un autre ? Simplement parce que le son du mot *hermite* faisait une musique parfaite dans mon vers, alors que le son *horse-shoe* (fer à cheval) n'allait pas du tout. Dans ce dilemme, il n'y avait qu'une solution : donner le véritable nom du crabe et sacrifier la musique du vers.[3]

Dans d'autres situations, il pourrait sembler nécessaire de faire le contraire et de sacrifier le sens à la sonorité. Ces dilemmes sont fréquents dans le choix des mots. Quelquefois, il n'y a pas un seul mot qui aille. Le vers serait beaucoup plus réussi si on y trouvait ce mot, mais quand le mot n'existe pas, on est obligé de sacrifier la concision et la force et de recourir à une locution ou à une périphrase. Dans un autre poème, par exemple, je me trouvais en grande difficulté parce qu'il me manquait un mot pour désigner le *crépuscule du matin* comme distinct du *crépuscule du soir*. Le mot *dusk*, en anglais, désigne les deux, mais la première impression qu'il donne pour tous ceux qui parlent anglais est l'impression du soir. Je suppose que ceci est dû au simple fait que tout le monde est debout le soir, alors qu'une minorité de gens est dehors avant l'aurore. (Je choisis cet exemple parce que je crois que le mot *crépuscule* présente les mêmes difficultés que le mot *dusk*.) Je crois bien que j'aurais pu trouver un mot qui désigne le crépuscule du matin dans plusieurs dialectes régionaux anglais, parce que les campagnards, très probablement, ont besoin de ce mot, alors que les gens de la ville n'en ont pas besoin. Mais un

mot de dialecte aurait éveillé de fausses associations d'idées, sans parler du fait que n'étant pas connu, ce mot aurait exigé une note au bas de la page. Je décrivais une scène d'une rue de Londres dont les personnages n'étaient pas gens à s'exprimer en dialecte, et où un mot inusité aurait été tout à fait déplacé. Donc, abandonnant l'espoir de trouver un mot, j'en fus réduit à en chercher deux. Le substantif ne pouvait qu'être *dusk* (crépuscule) ; il fallait y ajouter un adjectif pour indiquer lequel des *deux* crépuscules c'était ; et même si c'était nécessaire, il me faudrait ajouter encore quelques autres indications du moment de la journée. Je découvris d'abord un mot qui me sembla pour un court instant une vraie *trouvaille*, l'adjectif *antelucan*, « d'avant la lumière » ; dans le grand dictionnaire d'Oxford, ce mot est défini comme suit : « s'applique aux heures qui précèdent l'aurore ». C'était exactement le sens que je voulais et j'aimais beaucoup le *son* du mot. C'est un mot d'origine latine qui semble avoir été adapté à la langue anglaise au XVI^e^ siècle, époque où un grand nombre de mots anglais nouveaux, dont beaucoup ont été abandonnés depuis, furent tirés directement du latin par les érudits. Je ne le trouve pas dans le Littré, ce qui me fait croire que le français ne l'a jamais adopté.[4] J'avais donc trouvé un mot qui avait le sens désiré, et un son agréable, et qui pourtant n'allait pas. C'est un mot rare. Le sens en est assez clair, mais le mot ne convient qu'à un style « *orné* » ; et le passage dans lequel je voulais l'insérer était délibérément écrit en style très simple. Le mot aurait attiré l'attention sur lui-même en tant que mot, et aurait détourné l'attention de la tâche que ce mot avait à remplir. Cela aurait pu être un mot convenable si j'avais écrit dans le style de Milton, mais dans mon contexte, il aurait été aussi incongru qu'un spectateur survenant en tenue de soirée à un match de football. Je fus donc obligé à la fin d'adopter l'expression *waning dusk* (crépuscule décroissant) ; ce n'était pas ce que je voulais, mais je crois que c'était tout ce que l'anglais pouvait faire pour moi.[5]

Ces problèmes semblent n'avoir d'intérêt que pour les gens du métier. Les réflexions sur les difficultés verbales que rencontre le poète, nous conduisent à des problèmes d'un intérêt plus général. Ce compromis perpétuel avec les mots, cette nécessité de faire la plus grande attention au sens littéral, aux associations d'idées et à la musique, tout cela a de l'importance dans le processus du développement de l'idée originale. En évitant les divers dangers de la navigation, le poète ne peut trop réfléchir au choix du port qu'il espère atteindre éventuellement. Il est certainement nécessaire dans un poème d'une certaine longueur d'avoir un plan, d'établir sa route. Mais l'œuvre définitive ne sera pas l'œuvre que l'auteur avait en vue quand il a commencé à écrire et

donc constituera, comme je l'ai déjà fait entendre, dans une certaine mesure une surprise pour l'auteur lui-même. Car *l'idée* derrière un poème sera toujours moins que le *sens* du poème : le sens du poème dépend de la structure musicale, aussi bien que de la structure intellectuelle. Dans un poème, on ne sait jamais complètement ce qu'on a à dire avant de l'avoir dit ; car ce qu'on a l'intention de dire change pendant qu'on en fait de la poésie. Tout ceci a son importance dans le problème toujours en discussion de la forme et du contenu, de la *poésie pure* et de ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui l'*engagement*.[6]

Le problème de « Charybde et Scylla » prend maintenant la forme suivante : devons-nous considérer la poésie comme un véhicule pour l'expression de nos idées, de nos croyances, de nos émotions, de nos observations et de notre expérience, ou devons-nous considérer ces idées, ces croyances, ces émotions, ces observations, cette expérience, simplement comme la matière dont on fait un poème ? Il est évident qu'il y a ici deux problèmes : celui du poète et celui du lecteur. Le poète peut consciemment avoir une intention et inconsciemment arriver à quelque chose d'autre. Le résultat peut être, soit meilleur, soit pire que ce qu'il avait l'intention de faire. Dans un cas comme dans l'autre, on le juge par l'œuvre faite plutôt que par l'intention. D'autre part le lecteur qui prend plaisir à un poème parce qu'il a l'impression que ce poème est différent de ce qu'il est vraiment, mérite-t-il d'être félicité sur ses facultés d'appréciation ? Par conséquent, tournons notre attention vers le poème lui-même.

On voudrait ici pouvoir donner un exemple de mauvaise poésie, et cela est très difficile à faire de façon satisfaisante. Si la mauvaise poésie qu'on cite n'est pas connue de l'auditoire, l'exemple est inefficace. Mais la mauvaise poésie du passé est vite oubliée par tout le monde, sauf par quelques curieux d'érudition. Et citer de la mauvaise poésie d'aujourd'hui serait cruel envers des auteurs encore vivants. Au cours de mon existence, mon attention a été appelée sur une quantité énorme de vers mauvais ou médiocres. Ce genre de poésie me parvient tous les jours, de tous les coins du monde, et naturellement surtout en anglais, mais dans d'autres langues aussi, et même dans des langues qui me sont complètement inconnues. Dans ce dernier cas, je juge de la qualité simplement d'après les calculs de probabilités. Dans les cas les plus lamentables, bien sûr, les auteurs n'ont rien à dire et ne savent pas le dire. Mais les autres peuvent être divisés en deux espèces : la première est celle dans laquelle l'auteur a quelque chose à dire, mais ne sait pas en faire de la poésie ; la deuxième, c'est celle dans laquelle l'auteur n'a rien à dire, mais le dit d'une façon charmante. Dans ces deux cas extrêmes, nous sommes

exaspérés ou ennuyés. Dans le premier cas, l'auteur nous irrite parce qu'il paraît se servir de la poésie, et en exploiter les ressources dans un but d'enseignement ou de persuasion. Dans l'autre cas, nous sentons que l'auteur nous a fait perdre notre temps pour des bagatelles. Dans les deux cas, il y a imposture consciente ou inconsciente : on a cherché à nous tromper, soit pour nous faire croire qu'il y a eu transmutation poétique d'une idée, soit pour nous faire croire qu'un arrangement mélodieux de mots contient une idée.

Entre ces deux extrêmes de poésie mauvaise, cependant, il y a toute une zone à l'intérieur de laquelle la bonne poésie prend des formes très différentes. Dans certains cas, en lisant de la bonne poésie, nous faisons plus attention à ce que l'auteur dit : dans d'autres cas, notre attention se porte davantage sur la façon dont le poète s'exprime. En ce qui me concerne, le poète qui peut faire un beau poème avec un minimum de moyens proprement poétiques, et à l'autre extrême, le poète qui peut faire un beau poème avec un minimum de contenu, excitent tous deux en moi une singulière admiration. À l'un de ces extrêmes, je pourrais citer *La Divine Comédie* de Dante, et les poèmes de St-Jean de la Croix ; à l'autre, quelques-uns des petits poèmes lyriques dans les pièces de Shakespeare, spécialement dans *La Tempête*. Mais en choisissant ces exemples, je dois faire des réserves importantes. Dante peut donner l'impression de s'intéresser avant tout à ce qu'il a à dire, plutôt qu'à la façon de le dire. Mais nous savons très bien qu'aucun poète ne s'est appliqué avec plus d'attention au problème technique de la versification et du langage, et nul n'est jamais arrivé à une plus grande maîtrise du *métier*.

Quant aux chansons de Shakespeare, bien qu'elles gardent leur magie, même quand on les sort de leur contexte, elles ont aussi une valeur dramatique : pour leur auteur, elles représentent des détails nécessaires dans la structure de l'ensemble. Leur signification est due au contexte dans lequel nous les rencontrons.

Trouvons donc quelques autres exemples que les chansons de Shakespeare, de vraie poésie avec le minimum de contenu. Ici, je dois encore faire une distinction. Il y a des poèmes dans lesquels le contenu paraît de peu d'importance parce que le poème n'est que l'expression parfaite et individuelle de lieux communs ; il y a d'autres poèmes dans lesquels le contenu semble de peu d'importance parce que nous ne savons pas ce que c'est, et pourtant nous pouvons apprécier le poème et y prendre plaisir sans qu'il soit nécessaire de connaître le contenu. Dans le plaisir que donne la poésie, du moins en ce qui me concerne, ce sont là deux sensations tout à fait différentes. Pour l'expression parfaite et définitive du lieu commun, je ne trouve pas de

meilleur exemple que *L'Élégie écrite dans un cimetière de village* par Gray. Pour ceux qui ne connaissent pas ce poème, je dirai succinctement que c'est, naturellement, une méditation sur la mort. Le poète fait observer que les tombes sont celles d'humbles paysans, maintenant morts, mais qui ont été des êtres bien vivants. Dans la mort, nous sommes tous égaux, et il importe peu que nous ayons un monument impressionnant ou une simple pierre. Ceci amène le poète à supposer que deux ou trois des personnes inconnues qui sont enterrées ici, ont peut-être eu des dons qui leur auraient donné la gloire et la puissance si les circonstances avaient été favorables à leur succès. Il termine par une épitaphe qui semble peu plausible sur un jeune homme mort au printemps de la vie, et qui, semble-t-il, aurait pu dans d'autres circonstances, devenir un remarquable poète.

Je vous parle de ce poème parce que c'est un excellent exemple d'un très beau poème qui est composé presque entièrement de banalités. Il est impossible de traduire ce genre de poème : il faudrait trouver un autre poète de génie qui pourrait paraphraser, habiller, les mêmes banalités internationales, des beautés de sa propre langue. « Rien n'est plus beau que le lieu commun », dit Baudelaire quelque part.[7] Depuis Homère jusqu'à nos jours, la poésie s'est nourrie de lieux communs. Et ce serait une erreur de dire qu'un poème comme celui-ci, qui ne contient aucune idée originale, est poétique par sa forme plus que par son contenu. Le contenu n'est jamais à négliger, mais je crois qu'on peut dire que l'idée d'un poème, ou les idées qu'il contient, pour autant qu'elles peuvent être exprimées par des mots autres que ceux employés dans le poème, doivent être des banalités ou plutôt, doivent appartenir à un genre dans lequel ce que nous appelons banalités ou lieux communs constituent une espèce.

Dans ce genre, je mets *La Divine Comédie*. Quelle est la différence entre *La Divine Comédie* et l'*Élégie* de Gray en ce qui concerne le contenu en idées ? Il n'y a pas seulement dans *La Divine Comédie* un plus grand nombre et une plus grande variété d'idées, ou une structure beaucoup plus complexe. Les idées elles-mêmes sont plus philosophiques : c'est-à-dire, ce sont des lieux communs s'adressant à un nombre beaucoup plus restreint de gens que les lieux communs du poème de Gray. Voilà la différence. Les lieux communs de Gray sont connus de tous et acceptés par tous, et aucun effort mental n'est nécessaire pour les saisir. Le lieu commun, par conséquent, est une question de degré. Quand la notion est familière à tout le monde, comme par exemple celle-ci que *tous les hommes sont mortels*, alors nous disons que c'est la forme et non le contenu qui fait le poème.

Mais ce n'est pas seulement la facilité et la simplicité de l'idée qui nous fait concentrer notre attention sur la forme plutôt que sur le contenu. Cela arrive aussi dans le cas contraire quand l'idée est inaccessible : quand un poème est si obscur que nous n'en comprenons pas le sens, que nous n'en voyons pas le sujet, et que pourtant il nous donne un plaisir durable et intense, alors nous inclinons aussi à dire que c'est la forme qui est importante et non le contenu. Je passe de Gray à Mallarmé. Certainement, on ne peut pas trouver deux poètes plus différents l'un de l'autre. J'ai lu ou j'ai du moins essayé de lire un certain nombre de traités qui prétendaient expliquer le sens des poèmes de Mallarmé. Je n'irai pas jusqu'à nier la valeur de ces recherches des origines, mais je n'ai jamais trouvé qu'elles augmentassent mon plaisir aux poèmes. Au contraire, j'ai souvent été tenté de penser : « Si c'est là tout ce qu'il y a dans ce poème en dehors d'un heureux arrangement de syllabes, eh bien, ce n'est pas un aussi beau poème que je le pensais. Peut-être me suis-je trompé. » Mais mon esprit se refuse obstinément à croire cela : je reviens au poème et j'y trouve encore un grand plaisir, alors que j'ai oublié l'explication. Quelques-unes des « explications » ne font en fait qu'exposer certains accidents qui ont fait germer le poème dans l'esprit du poète. Cela me semble curieux, mais sans rapport avec le poème. D'autres explications, spécialement quand il s'agit de *Un coup de dés* ou de *Igitur* prétendent nous présenter une philosophie qui serait immanente au poème ; mais la philosophie, au moins telle qu'elle est exposée par l'interprète, ne me semble jamais tout à fait digne du poème.[8] Pourtant, je n'en tire pas la conclusion, du fait qu'il n'y a pas correspondance entre l'interprétation du poème et le plaisir que j'y prends, soit que les poèmes de Mallarmé n'ont pas de sens, et donc qu'il n'est pas nécessaire pour un grand poème d'avoir un sens, ni même que je suis capable de prendre plaisir à un poème en sachant qu'il n'a pas de sens. Un poème qui n'a pas de sens doit être insignifiant et donc ne peut pas vraiment être un poème. Il nous a donné simplement une illusion passagère, mais je suis sûr que sitôt que nous nous apercevrions qu'il n'a pas de sens, nous le rejetterions tous. Le poème [de Mallarmé] est donc pour moi à l'extrême opposé de *La Divine Comédie*, mais seulement dans ces limites : que je puis prendre plaisir à un chant de Dante alors que mon attention consciente est appliquée uniquement à sa façon de s'exprimer.[9†] Mais ceci ne veut pas dire que le génie verbal et le mérite technique de Dante, ou le sens du sonnet de Mallarmé, ne sont pas une partie essentielle de mon plaisir.

Depuis un assez grand nombre d'années, j'estime, comme je l'ai dit dans certains de mes essais, qu'il vaut mieux pour un poète prendre sa

philosophie chez les philosophes, plutôt que d'inventer une philosophie à lui. Il me semble qu'il y a là simplement deux fonctions différentes : le génie que possèdent les plus grands philosophes pour l'abstraction et la formulation des concepts, me semble tout à fait différent du génie qui consiste à transmuer une philosophie en poésie. Ce serait un miracle et presque une monstruosité que ces deux dons si distincts, et élevés à la puissance du génie, puissent co-exister dans le même esprit. À cause de cela, j'ai exalté les poèmes de Lucrèce et de Dante aux dépens des poèmes philosophiques de Blake ; et je suis même allé jusqu'à soutenir qu'une philosophie inférieure, fragmentaire ou chaotique pourrait aussi bien servir à un grand poète dans certaines circonstances, qu'une philosophie plus élevée ; car autrement, nous serions obligés pour cette seule raison d'admettre que Shakespeare est inférieur à Dante.[10]

Mais je crois que tout récemment j'en suis venu à comprendre un peu mieux cette question. J'incline à penser que nous pouvons donner deux significations différentes à cette expression *la philosophie d'un poète* : 1° Une « philosophie » qu'il a empruntée ou qu'il a cherché à construire lui-même *dans le langage de la philosophie*. 2° Une « philosophie » qui ne peut s'exprimer que *dans le langage de la poésie*, et c'est cette dernière qui est au sens le plus vrai l'œuvre originale du poète. Certaines observations du Professeur Pieper, de Munster, sur la relation de l'activité philosophique avec l'activité poétique m'ont encouragé dans cette opinion.[11] Quand nous étudions la métaphysique d'Aristote et de saint Thomas, afin de mieux comprendre Dante, nous ajoutons à nos connaissances sur les origines des matériaux qui servirent à faire le poème. Mais la philosophie de Dante, en tant que poète, est quelque chose de différent de sa philosophie en tant que discipline des philosophes.

Si, par exemple, en méditant sur certains des passages les plus philosophiques du *Purgatoire*, nous les retraduisons dans les termes du *De Anima* d'Aristote, nous sommes étonnés que le poète ait pu transformer en poésie une substance si austère et si réfractaire. Mais le fait que cette substance a été transmuée en poésie signifie que nous ne sommes plus dans le même mode de pensée que les maîtres de philosophie de Dante. D'un autre point de vue, cette idée m'explique pourquoi je suis déçu par les interprétations faites de Mallarmé.

La philosophie d'un poète ne peut se traduire en termes de concepts. Tout ce que nous faisons quand nous essayons de traduire ainsi Dante, c'est de faire passer notre attention de Dante à Aristote et à saint Thomas, et de

donner à Dante le mérite qui appartient aux philosophes. Pour Mallarmé, nous réduisons sa philosophie poétique en une philosophie conceptionnelle inférieure. Dans un cas, comme dans l'autre, nous ne rendons pas justice à la réussite intellectuelle du poète.

En disant cela, je ne prétends pas soutenir, soit que Mallarmé est un aussi grand poète que Dante, ce qui ne serait certainement pas vrai ; soit que cela vaut la peine de discuter l'œuvre de tous les poètes en relations avec leur « philosophie ». Peut-être que je cours le risque d'une certaine confusion, en donnant au mot « philosophie » deux sens. Dans le sens ordinaire, quand nous demandons : « Quelle est la philosophie d'un tel ? », en donnant le nom du poète, nous nous attendons à ce que la réponse soit exprimée dans les termes de quelque philosophe ou de quelque école de philosophie. Si nous parlons de Dante, nous répondons : « Aristote et saint Thomas d'Aquin » ; si nous parlons de Lucrèce, la réponse facile est : « La philosophie épicurienne ». Ou bien dans le cas de Goethe, par exemple, nous sommes forcés d'employer un plus grand nombre de mots : nous sommes forcés de consulter toute l'œuvre de Goethe, ses lettres, ses conversations, nous cherchons l'origine de ses idées, et nous cherchons à les organiser en un tout intelligible, cohérent. Mais dans chacun de ces cas, nous répondons comme nous le ferions si on nous interrogeait sur quelqu'un que nous connaissons personnellement. Quand nous demandons : « Quelles sont les idées d'un tel ? » nous sommes en général satisfaits si on nous apprend que c'est un catholique ou un protestant, ou un spiritualiste, un théosophe, un rationaliste, et si en même temps on nous dit le nom du parti politique pour lequel il vote. Il nous suffit, en général, de savoir ce que cet homme professe comme croyances religieuses ou politiques. S'il y a une contradiction évidente entre ce qu'il professe et ce qu'il fait, nous en sommes réduits aux conjectures. Si nous soupçonnons l'homme d'hypocrisie, c'est peut-être une conjecture probable ; mais s'il nous semble que c'est son propre esprit qui est dans un état de confusion et qu'il n'a pas mis ses idées en ordre, il se peut que nous disions : « Cet homme ne sait pas ce qu'il croit. » Il y a très peu d'êtres humains en qui nous trouvions une véritable conformité entre les croyances et la conduite ; et dans la plus grande partie de la vie, il ne faut pas exiger une telle conformité. D'un certain point de vue, nos croyances sont ces idées et ces principes auxquels nous adhérons consciemment pendant toute notre vie ; mais, d'autre part, notre croyance, à un moment donné, est représentée par *la façon dont nous agissons à ce moment-là*. C'est peut-être seulement devant la menace et dans l'acceptation du martyre que les

croyances d'un homme sont complètement réalisées et prouvent leur authenticité. Peut-être que cette différence sera un peu plus claire si je donne en exemple la poésie spécifiquement religieuse ou *dévotionnelle* (et Dante n'entre pas dans cette catégorie). Dans ce genre de poésie, les échecs se produisent le plus souvent quand la philosophie conceptuelle d'un auteur est une philosophie qu'il *désire* accepter, mais à laquelle il ne donne pas complètement son assentiment intellectuel. C'est la raison la plus fréquente de l'échec de ceux qui voudraient faire de la poésie religieuse. Parmi les écrivains qui ont produit de la bonne poésie dévotionnelle, il en est dont la croyance est complète et passionnée, mais dans les œuvres de qui la personnalité de l'auteur joue un rôle essentiel : nous partageons ses sentiments, notre exaltation nous vient à travers la sienne. Ainsi Georges Herbert. Dans une catégorie plus haute encore, je mettrai St-Jean de la Croix, dans les poèmes de qui l'émotion est si directement la conséquence de l'idée, que la personnalité de l'auteur est, pour ainsi dire, annihilée. En vivant de ses poèmes, nous semblons être en relation directe avec ce qu'il a vu, sans la médiation de la personnalité de l'auteur lui-même.

Il vaudrait peut-être mieux parler de « la philosophie » de l'auteur, quand nous voulons désigner la philosophie qu'il a soit empruntée aux philosophes, soit construite pour lui-même en tant que philosophe, et parler de « la philosophie du poème » quand nous voulons désigner ce qui ne se trouve que dans le poème lui-même, et qui ne peut être traduit en concepts. Peut-être ferais-je mieux de vous rappeler notre point de départ. Nous avons commencé par distinguer, à l'ordinaire, le *contenu* et la *forme* et nous avons noté que, pour parler d'une façon courante, quelquefois, nous prenions plaisir à un poème à cause de ce que le poète dit, et à un autre poème, à cause de la façon dont le poète le dit. Dans le premier cas, nous sommes enclins à considérer *la forme* de l'expression *comme un simple moyen*, et dans le second cas de considérer *le contenu* comme une *simple substance*. Cela est une question de fait. À un extrême nous nous demandons : « Pourquoi ceci est un poème, et non pas seulement de la prose versifiée ? » et à l'autre extrême, nous nous demandons : « En quoi ceci a un sens ? » Je ne m'occupe pas ici des cas limites, mais de la question : « Quelle est la relation entre la valeur d'un poème et la valeur des idées dont ce poème a été tiré ? » Je pose cette question à cause de mes propres sentiments, spécialement, par exemple, au sujet de la poésie de Mallarmé. Je n'ai pas le sentiment, en lisant les poèmes de Mallarmé que j'y prends plaisir seulement à cause de leur forme : je sens que le contenu est important. Mais je ne suis pas tenté de

chercher à m'expliquer de quoi parle Mallarmé dans ses poèmes ; et, comme je l'ai dit, quand j'ai lu des explications de leur sens, j'ai toujours été déçu. L'interprète a peut-être raison sur son propre plan de pensée ; mais ce qu'on m'offre est différent de ce que je demande. Dans le cas de Dante, ce qu'on m'offre est quelque chose de très respectable en soi, c'est une philosophie qu'on peut reconnaître ; dans le cas de Mallarmé, c'est quelque chose de relativement insignifiant. C'est la seule différence. Et je sens que le poète m'a donné quelque chose qui m'a causé un plaisir que je ne puis pas appeler simplement sensuel. Il m'a donné un *exercice intellectuel* et un *plaisir intellectuel*, qui sont différents de ce que me donne l'explication en prose. Si je suis justifié en parlant de la cause de ce plaisir intellectuel comme « *la philosophie du poème* » je ne puis le savoir que par la façon dont mon public recevra cette formule.[12†] Évidemment, cette formule « la philosophie du poème » ne s'applique pas également à toutes sortes de poèmes. Elle s'applique au mieux aux poèmes de ces poètes qui, s'ils n'avaient pas été poètes, auraient pu être philosophes. Elle comprend des poètes qui, s'ils avaient fait de la philosophie au lieu de faire de la poésie, n'auraient peut-être atteint qu'une très modeste place en tant que philosophes. Et parmi ceux-là, je me compte moi-même. (Car il me semble que c'est inévitable quand un poète fait des théories sur la poésie, le genre de poésie sur lequel il concentre son attention, c'est son propre genre de poésie. Comme Valéry l'a dit « il n'est pas de théorie qui ne soit un fragment, soigneusement préparé, de quelque autobiographie ».)[13] Quand je parle de « philosophie d'un poème », j'ai dans l'esprit, avant tout, un poème écrit par un poète qui a fait des études philosophiques et qui a peut-être même construit des théories philosophiques originales. Ces théories ont joué un rôle important dans sa formation, et donc paraîtront dans sa poésie, mais dans une forme dans laquelle elles ne sont plus proposées en tant que théorie mais présentées comme des faits d'expérience, des éléments qui composent, avec toute son expérience de la vie sous ses différentes formes, les matériaux, la substance de ses poèmes. Des philosophies différentes, des opinions philosophiques opposées qui ne peuvent pas dans le domaine de la discussion philosophique être maintenues simultanément, peuvent être ainsi unies et réconciliées sur le plan poétique. Je dirai de plus que dans cette opération, il y a un travail intellectuel d'organisation qui est analogue au travail conceptuel du philosophe. Et je dirai aussi que les sentiments d'un lecteur délicat, en s'assimilant un poème de ce genre, sont analogues à ses sentiments lorsqu'il s'assimile l'ouvrage d'un philosophe. Seulement, la *compréhension*

d'un ouvrage philosophique et la compréhension d'un poème sont deux choses très différentes. C'est parce qu'on ne comprend pas ce fait qu'il y a différentes façons de *comprendre*, qu'on nous a infligé tant de fausses explications de la poésie philosophique : toutes ces explications qui réduisent en fait la philosophie d'un poème à des termes abstraits : soit des maîtres de philosophie du poète, soit des concepts venant de sa propre pensée lorsqu'il faisait de la philosophie et non de la poésie.

En ce qui concerne la philosophie abstraite qu'un poète emprunte aux philosophes, ou qu'il invente lui-même en tant que philosophe, il faut faire quelques réserves. Les idées que je viens de *discuter* ne s'appliquent naturellement pas à tous les genres de poésie, et elles ne sont pas également importantes pour tous les poèmes du même genre. Elles sont applicables dans la mesure dans laquelle les idées philosophiques ont contribué à former l'esprit du poète et ont été assimilées (comme un fertilisant, pourrait-on dire) dans cette *couche*[14] profonde de l'expérience qui constitue le sol même dans lequel les germes de la poésie se nourrissent. Ces considérations s'appliquent particulièrement quand la substance d'un poème, riche d'ingrédients philosophiques, est *organisée* architecturalement. Mais ni la puissance d'éléments de ce genre, ni leur organisation architecturale, n'est la condition universelle de *toute* poésie. La valeur que nous donnons à un poème dans lequel on les trouve n'est pas en relation directe avec la valeur que nous donnons aux idées originales sous leur forme abstraite : non seulement il est possible d'écrire un mauvais poème sur la plus grande des philosophies ; mais il est également possible d'écrire un très beau poème sur une philosophie qui, exprimée en langage abstrait, est presque insignifiante. S'il en était autrement, nous serions obligés d'affirmer (ceux d'entre nous qui sont chrétiens) que Dante est un plus grand poète qu'Homère ou Virgile, que Racine est un plus grand dramaturge que Sophocle, ce qui serait évidemment absurde. La grandeur d'un poème particulier dépend de beaucoup de choses ; entre autres, la grandeur de la langue dans laquelle le poète écrit, et dépend par conséquent des autres poètes qui ont déjà écrit dans la même langue. Il est dur de dire, mais je crois que c'est vrai, qu'un poète qui n'a que des dons limités, mais qui a l'avantage d'une langue pleine de grandeur peut être plus important pour l'humanité qu'un autre poète plus riche en génie, mais obligé de faire son œuvre dans une langue qui est en elle-même à un niveau plus bas dans le monde en général.

J'en viens enfin à un cas particulier de poésie qui dans le sens que j'ai cherché à définir peut s'appeler philosophie. Quand j'ai parlé, il y a quelques

instants, de Gray et de son *Élégie dans un cimetière de village*, ce n'était pas seulement à cause de la valeur d'exemple de ce poème à ce moment, mais pour vous préparer à une comparaison que je vais maintenant faire. Je ne me souviens pas d'avoir jamais lu une analyse comparée de l'*Élégie* de Gray et du *Cimetière Marin*, et pourtant je serais très surpris que personne n'ait encore fait cette comparaison. Un poète anglais du XVIII^e^ siècle, et un poète français du XX^e^ ont, l'un et l'autre, écrit un poème qui est une *méditation dans un cimetière*, et, dans chaque cas, c'est le plus beau poème écrit sur ce sujet dans cette langue. Tous ceux qui ont la moindre prétention à connaître la poésie de l'une ou de l'autre langue doivent connaître ces poèmes. Pour notre sujet, la comparaison entre les deux poèmes est particulièrement intéressante.

Le poème de Gray atteint, c'est bien connu, la perfection d'une forme de langage et de versification qui appartenait aux poètes de son temps, et qui avait été portée à ce point d'excellence par un siècle de pratique. Le poème de Valéry est, au contraire, frappant à première lecture par l'audace triomphante de son originalité technique.[15] J'hésite un peu à le dire, mais je suis enclin à supposer que dans ce poème de Valéry, il y a un renouvellement de la métrique française sous l'influence de modèles italiens.[16] J'ai parlé de l'*Élégie* de Gray comme étant l'expression excellente de lieux communs. Dans le poème de Valéry, il y a des lieux communs (quel est le grand poème où il n'y en a pas ?) Mais il y a une différence considérable entre un poème dans lequel on trouve des lieux communs et un poème basé sur le lieu commun.

Un vers comme :

La larve file où se formaient des pleurs[17]

ou comme :

Tout va sous terre et rentre dans le jeu,[18]

a toute la force d'un lieu commun exprimé dans des mots que personne n'a encore employés ; comme pour certains vers de Gray, je sens une sorte d'étonnement et d'admiration comme devant un miracle de résurrection de morts. Il y a des différences intéressantes sur le même plan :

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,[19]

et

Les cris aigus des filles chatouillées.[20]

Il y a plus de différence ici qu'entre le XVIII^e^ et le XX^e^ siècle, et même qu'entre le français et l'anglais, comme langues. Mais y a-t-il une différence importante de type entre les deux poèmes ? Il y a une différence fondamentale. Le contenu du poème de Gray consiste principalement en idées qui sont venues à tous les hommes dans toutes les langues et dans tous les temps. D'où il découle que la structure de ce poème est simplement une succession plausible de telles pensées s'enchaînant les unes aux autres. Le poème de Valéry a, ce que j'appelle, la structure philosophique, une organisation non pas seulement de réactions successives à une situation donnée, mais de réactions à ses premières réactions. Il a mis beaucoup plus de lui-même dans son poème – jusqu'à atteindre ce point où, livrer le maximum de son être dans un poème, conduit finalement à un maximum d'impersonnalité.[21]

Valéry a résolu le problème de « Charybde et Scylla » à sa façon, à cause d'un ensemble de dons qu'on ne trouve qu'en lui. Je ne vois pas d'autre poète qui eût pu aussi certainement que Valéry se distinguer comme philosophe au sens non poétique du mot, s'il avait voulu le faire. Je m'imagine facilement que si Valéry avait choisi la philosophie dans sa jeunesse, il aurait fait une carrière qui l'aurait conduit au Collège de France en tant que philosophe, et lui aurait amené le genre d'auditoire qui se pressait, il y a quarante ans, aux conférences d'Henri Bergson.[22] Sa parenté avec Mallarmé me semble exagérée, ou du moins on ne considère pas assez *qu'il a d'autres ancêtres*. À mon idée, son esprit était *beaucoup plus philosophique* que celui de Mallarmé ou que celui d'Edgar Poe, à qui les deux poètes français ont rendu un si généreux hommage.[23] Ayant choisi la poésie, Paul Valéry accomplit ce miracle d'écrire des poèmes dans lesquels les deux modes de philosophie que j'ai essayé de définir, le mode abstrait et le mode poétique, sont mieux unis que dans l'œuvre d'aucun poète. Il reste poète avant tout, parce que, en traduisant le contenu d'un de ses poèmes en termes abstraits, on le change en quelque chose d'autre, et en *quelque chose de moindre valeur*.

En insistant sur ce caractère vraiment unique de la poésie de Valéry, je ne veux pas dire qu'il ait atteint le but vers lequel tout poète devrait tendre, ni même qu'il s'en soit rapproché plus qu'aucun autre. Je n'ai rien dit de sa *grandeur* relative quand on le compare à d'autres poètes. J'ai dit seulement qu'il a exploré ce que nul autre n'avait jamais exploré : et si un poète nous a donné quelques poèmes (et je considère que *La Jeune Parque* et *Le Cimetière marin* sont ses triomphes) dans lesquels il a réalisé un potentiel de poésie comme personne d'autre ne l'avait encore fait, et comme personne probablement ne le fera plus, cela en soi, c'est la gloire.

* * * *

Mais permettez-moi de revenir à nos deux monstres marins.

Si un poète nous donne l'impression qu'il emploie ses dons pour nous persuader d'accepter une théorie particulière, ou si, d'autre part, il semble exploiter, sans en accepter la responsabilité, une théorie ou une croyance comme substance dont il cherche à faire de la poésie, ce poète, dans un cas comme dans l'autre, n'aboutira qu'au naufrage et à des destructions.

Le *philosophe* cherche à nous faire *voir* un aspect de la réalité. Le *poète* cherche à nous en faire voir un autre. Ce sont là deux modes de contemplation. La persuasion et la propagande appartiennent à un tout autre univers de la pensée. Et pourtant, il faut encore faire une autre réserve. On ne peut pas échapper à Charybde et à Scylla simplement en se procurant une bonne carte du détroit. Tous les poètes ne sont pas conscients de ce qu'ils font : et il peut arriver quelquefois qu'un poète réussisse à écrire un beau poème avec des erreurs d'intentions. Si sa boussole est détraquée, il peut même, en cherchant à se diriger droit sur Charybde, ou tout droit sur Scylla, avoir la bonne fortune de passer triomphalement entre les deux.

J'aurais aimé me lancer dans une étude des Charybde et des Scylla du dramaturge ; et même de pénétrer dans des mers plus dangereuses encore et d'examiner les Charybde et les Scylla de l'homme politique : qu'on pourrait appeler : l'*idéologie* et l'*opportunisme*. Mais je dois moi-même éviter à la fois Charybde et Scylla. Entre l'abstrait et le concret, entre la condensation et la prolixité, entre le banal et l'obscur, le voyage est périlleux.[24†]

ORIGINAL ENGLISH TEXT[1]

My writings, in prose and verse, may or may not have surprised other people: but I know that they always, on first sight, surprise myself. [2] I have often found that my most interesting or original ideas, when put into words and marshalled in final order, were ideas which I had not been aware of holding. It is ordinarily supposed that a writer knows exactly what he wants to say, before he sits down at his desk; and that his subsequent labours are merely a matter of a better choice of words, a neater turn of phrase, and a more orderly arrangement. Yet I have always discovered that anything I have written – anything at least which pleased me – was a different thing from the composition which I had thought I was going to write. Perhaps I never quite know what I am saying until I have said it. Whether I have undertaken the particular task spontaneously, or whether it is a task set for

me by circumstances, the element of the unexpected always plays a great part.

[Hence the importance, at an early stage, of the title. One begins by choosing a title, in order to assure oneself that one has a subject: for a title is a kind of substitute or shadow of a subject. Now the relation of title to subject, and of both to the final composition, is, in the case of this address which I am at the moment delivering, a peculiar one. I am, as you may already have noted with impatience, curious about the process by which anything gets written: I am the more tempted to indulge this curiosity on the present occasion, because the Centre Méditerranéen is so closely associated in my mind with the name of the great explorer of thought, feeling and language who was Paul Valéry.[2a] So, in the first place, I will reveal that the title of this lecture not only preceded the subject, but was itself due to a misunderstanding. In correspondence with your President, M. Émile Henriot, I complained of the difficulties of deciding on what to talk about to an unknown audience; and I added, in a parenthetical and ejaculatory way: "Scylla and Charybdis! to avoid both frivolity and dullness!" Your President, under the impression that I was offering this remark as a subject, replied at once that he thought it a happy idea, and that this title would be announced. I did not immediately correct him, because I wanted to wait until I had thought of something else. And then I said to myself: "Why not?" The title is in itself a good one. The myth belongs to that Mediterranean world from which our culture springs; it refers to a well-known episode in Mediterranean prehistory; like other myths in the story of Ulysses it is what I believe Professor Jung would call a universal archetype of human experience.[2b] It responds to some of the deepest desires, and terrors of all human beings: it is the experience of life itself. It is applicable to almost any subject one can discuss. So, having had the title thrust upon me, I launched with zest into the exploration of my own mind, curious to discover what I might find there.

I turned then to consider the significance of Scylla and Charybdis in Poetry; for it is my experience that to enlist the attention of an audience it is best to begin from what one is generally supposed to know something about; if we can give the impression at the beginning that we are talking about things of which we can speak from experience and with some authority, the listeners may be more readily persuaded to accept our opinions on matters where our authority is more contestable.[2c] It struck me at once that][2d] while trying to write a poem I am frequently in the position of the Homeric navigator in that particular difficulty. It is supposed that the poet, if anybody,

is one engaged in perpetual pursuit of the right word. My own experience would be more accurately described as the attempt to avoid the wrong word. For as to the right word, I am not convinced it is anything but a mirage. I will try to justify this opinion.

To take the problem first in its simplest form. The word which is the right word in one respect may be the wrong word in another. The poetic value, the poetic meaning I may say, of a passage of verse, depends upon three things: the literal meaning of the word, the associations of the word, and the sound of the word. The word with the exact meaning you want may be very far from euphonious in the context of the words among which it must be fitted. The word which has the right sound in that place may not mean quite what you want it to mean. Either choice means shipwreck. If the word makes the wrong noise, the surface of the poem is defaced; if it has the wrong meaning, the poem will not stand examination. In neither case, is the result poetry.

To illustrate this simple dilemma to you briefly and cogently, I should have to find instances in French. But few persons, and certainly not myself, know any language but their own intimately enough to be sure of themselves in choosing illustrations. So perhaps an insoluble problem which I encountered in the course of my own work, may suffice, as I do not need to quote the English line of verse. In one of my poems, "The Dry Salvages," I had occasion to describe the sort of debris found on a sea beach, and among it the shells of a particular kind of crab. On re-reading the poem some time after the final text had been published, I was horrified to observe that I had referred to the wrong kind of crab – the hermit crab which has no shell of its own, but takes for a habitation the shell of some other deceased crustacean. The hermit crab, having no shell of its own, could hardly be identified by a shell on the beach; and indeed, I am not sure that I have ever seen a hermit crab. The crab I had in mind was the horseshoe crab. I knew the difference perfectly well: how was it that after spending months in re-writing and revising that poem, I had failed to notice that I continued to associate the name of one kind of crab with the mental picture of another? Simply because the sound of the word hermit fitted perfectly for my line, and the sound of horseshoe was harsh. In such a dilemma, there was only one choice: to put in the right crab, and sacrifice the right sound.[3]

In another situation, it might be desirable to take the other course and sacrifice sense to sound. Such dilemmas are frequent in the choice of words. Sometimes there is no one word which will do. The line of verse would be

very much more effective if there was that word, but in its absence you must sacrifice concision and have recourse to a phrase or a periphrasis. In another poem, for instance, I found myself in great difficulties for a word to express twilight before dawn, as distinct and different from twilight before night. The word dusk, in English, means either: but its immediate denotation, to every English speaking person, is the evening. I suppose that is simply due to the fact that everybody is about in the evening, and only a minority of people are out of doors before dawn. (I have chosen this instance because I believe that crépuscule presents the same difficulty as dusk). I believe that I could have found one word meaning the dusk of morning, in one or more English country dialects, because country people are more likely to need such a word than townsfolk. But a dialect word – apart from the fact that its obscurity would probably have required a footnote – would have aroused the wrong associations. The scene I was describing was in a London street; the personages in the scene were not people who would express themselves in country dialect; and any dialect word would have been most unsuitable. So, after giving up the hope of finding one word, I had to try to find two words. The substantive could only be dusk; there would have to be an adjective to indicate which dusk I meant; and if necessary I should have to support it with some other indication of the time of day. I first hit upon a word which seemed to me, for a short time, to be a real *trouvaille*: the adjective antelucan – "before the light"; in the great Oxford Dictionary it is defined as: "of or pertaining to the hours just before dawn." Its meaning was exactly what I required, and I was much taken by the sound of the word. It is a word of Latin origin which appears to have been adapted to the English language during the XVI Century, when a great many new English words – many of which have since been abandoned – were coined by scholars directly from Latin. As I do not find it in Littré, it does not appear to have been adopted into French.[4] But here was a word with the right meaning and a very agreeable sound which nevertheless would not do. It is a rare word. Though its meaning is clear enough, such a word is appropriate only for an ornate style; and the passage into which I wished to insert it was in a very deliberately plain style: the word would have attracted attention to itself, and away from the task it had to perform. It might have been a suitable word if I had been writing in the style of Milton; but in my context it would have had the incongruity of a spectator appearing in full evening dress at a football match. So I had in the end to put "waning dusk." It was not what I wanted: but it was, I believe, the best that the English language could do for me.[5]

I hope I have not taxed your attention too long with what may seem problems of interest only to those of the métier; because these reflections on the verbal difficulties of the poet lead up to problems of wider interest. My point is that the perpetual compromise with words, the necessity for vigilant attention to the literal meaning, the associations and the sound, has a bearing on the process of development of the original idea. In avoiding the several dangers of navigation, the poet cannot be too much concerned with the choice of the port which he hopes eventually to reach. It is necessary certainly, in a poem of any length, to have a plan, to lay a course. But the final work will be another work than that which the author set out to write; and will, as I have already suggested, be something of a surprise to the author himself. For the idea behind a poem will always be less than the meaning of the poem: the meaning depends upon the musical structure as well as upon the intellectual structure. In a poem, one does not altogether know what it is that one has to say, until one has said it; for what one intends to say is altered in the course of making poetry of it.

All this has a bearing upon the endlessly discussed problem of form and content, of *la poésie pure*, and of what is nowadays called *engagement*.[6] The problem of Scylla and Charybdis is now appearing in the following form: should we regard poetry as a vehicle for the expression of our ideas, beliefs, emotions, observations and experiences, or should we consider these ideas, beliefs, emotions, observations and experiences simply as the material out of which we make a poem?

It is obvious that there are here two problems: that of the poet himself, and that of the reader of poetry. The poet may consciously intend to do one thing, and unconsciously achieve something else: the result may be something either better or worse than what he set out to do. In either event, he is judged by the achievement rather than the intention. The reader, however, who enjoys a poem under the impression that it is something different from what it is, is hardly to be congratulated upon his capacity for appreciation. Let us turn our attention, then, to the poem.

Here one would like to be able to give illustrations of bad poetry; and this is always difficult to do effectively. If the bad poetry one cites is unknown to the audience, the reference is ineffective. But the bad poetry of the past is soon forgotten by all but a few curious scholars; and to cite bad poetry of the present would be unkind to living authors. So I will ask you to accept my assurance that I have gained in the course of my life a very extensive acquaintance with bad and indifferent verse. It comes to me daily, from all

quarters of the world; chiefly, of course in English; but in other languages too, and even in languages wholly unknown to me – for the last, I can only guess at its quality from the laws of probability. The worst, of course, is that in which the authors have nothing to say, and do not know how to say it. But the rest is divisible into two kinds: that in which the author has something to say, but does not make poetry of it; and that in which the author has nothing to say, but says it rather charmingly. At these two extremes we are exasperated or bored by the result: at the one, we are annoyed with the author who appears to be merely making use of verse, and exploiting its resources, for purposes of exposition or persuasion; at the other we feel that the author has been wasting our time with something trivial. In either case an imposture, conscious or unconscious, has been attempted: either to deceive us into believing that an idea has been transmuted into poetry, or into believing that a melodious arrangement of words contains an idea.

Between the extremes of two kinds of bad poetry, however, there is a range in which good poetry can differ widely. With some good poetry, we are, in reading it, more attentive to what the author is saying; with other good poetry, more attentive to the way in which he says it. For me, the poet who can make a fine poem with the minimum of the poetic, and at the other end of the scale the poet who can make a fine poem with the minimum of content, are always the subject of particular interest. At the one extreme, we might point to the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, and the poems of St. John of the Cross; at the other to some of the lyrics in Shakespeare's plays – notably those in *The Tempest*. But in choosing these illustrations I must make an important qualification. Dante may give the impression of being concerned with what he has to say, rather than with the way in which he says it: but we know perfectly well that no poet has ever given closer attention than did he to the technical problems of versification and language, or has ever attained a greater mastery of the craft. And as for Shakespeare's songs, though they are magical even when extracted from their context, they have a dramatic value also, which means that for their author they were a necessary detail in the structure of the scene in which they occur: their significance is due to the context in which we find them.

Let us try to find some other illustration, therefore, than Shakespeare's songs, of genuine poetry with the minimum of content. And here I must make a distinction. There are poems in which the content appears unimportant because the poem is a perfect and individual expression of

commonplaces; there are others in which the content appears unimportant because we do not know what it is, and yet can enjoy and appreciate the poem without the necessity of knowing what it is. In my own enjoyment of poetry, at least, these are two distinct experiences. For the perfect and final expression of the commonplace, I can think of no better example than Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*. For those who do not know the poem, I will say briefly that it is, naturally, a meditation on mortality. The poet remarks that the graves are those of humble peasants who were once living and are now dead. In death we are all equal, and it does not matter very much whether we have an impressive monument or a plain stone. This leads to the conjecture that one or two of the obscure people buried here may have had gifts which would have brought them to fame and power had circumstances favoured such success. He ends with a rather improbable epitaph upon a young man, dead before his prime, who, one infers, might in other circumstances have become a distinguished poet.

I have alluded to this particular poem because it is a good example of a beautiful poem which is nearly all platitude. Such poems are untranslatable: they can only be paraphrased by another poet of genius who can clothe the same international platitudes in the beauties of his own language. "Rien n'est plus beau que le lieu commun" says Baudelaire somewhere.[7] From Homer to our own day, poetry has depended upon it. And we should be mistaken if we said that a poem like this, containing no strikingly original idea, was poetry of form rather than content. The content is never negligible. But we may say, I think, that the idea of a poem, or the ideas in it, so far as they can be expressed in words other than those of the poem itself, must be platitude, or rather, must belong to a genus of which what we call platitude or the "commonplace" is a species.

Within this genus I include *The Divine Comedy*. What is the difference, with regard to the content of idea, between *The Divine Comedy* and Gray's *Elegy*? There is not merely a much greater number and variety of ideas, or a much more complex structure. The ideas themselves are more philosophic: that is, they are commonplaces for a much smaller number of people than the commonplaces of Gray's poem. That is the difference. The commonplaces of Gray are known to everybody and accepted by everybody: no mental effort is necessary to apprehend them. The commonplace is a matter of degree. It is when the statement is familiar to everyone – as, for instance, the statement that all men are mortal – that we say it is the form and not the content that makes that poem.

It is not only, however, the immediate accessibility and simplicity of the idea that makes us attend to form rather than content. The same thing happens in an antithetical case: when the idea is inaccessible. When a poem is so obscure that we do not know what the meaning is, or even what it is about, but when nevertheless it gives us enduring delight in a high degree, then also we are inclined to say that it is the form and not the content that matters. I pass from Gray to Mallarmé: no two poets, surely, could be more different. I have read, or attempted to read, a number of treatises written to explain the meaning of Mallarmé's poems. I am not prepared to deny the value of such investigation of origins; but I have never found that they enhanced my enjoyment of the poem. On the contrary, I have sometimes been tempted to say: "if that is all there is to the poem, apart from a felicitous arrangement of syllables, it is not so fine a poem as I thought it was – perhaps I was mistaken." But my mind obstinately refuses to believe this: I return to the poem, and I still enjoy it, after forgetting the explanation. Some of the "explanations," indeed, set forth no more than certain accidents of circumstance which made the poem germinate in the poet's mind: these seem to me curious, but irrelevant. Others – especially when it comes to *Un coup de dès* or *Igitur* – profess to set forth an underlying philosophy: but the philosophy, as expounded by the interpreter, never seems to me quite worthy of the poem.[8] Yet I do not draw the conclusion, from the lack of concurrence between the interpretation of the poem and my enjoyment of it, either that Mallarmé's poems are meaningless, and consequently that it is not necessary for a great poem to mean anything, or even that I myself can enjoy a poem knowing that it has no meaning. A poem that means nothing must be trivial – and therefore cannot be genuinely a poem. It has merely given us a momentary illusion; but I am sure that, the moment we perceived an absence of meaning, we should all reject it. Mallarmé's poem is for me therefore at the opposite extreme from *The Divine Comedy*, only within these limits: that I can enjoy a canto of Dante while paying conscious attention only to what he is saying, and a sonnet of Mallarmé while paying conscious attention only to the way in which he says it.[9†] But this does not mean that the verbal genius and technical mastery of Dante, or the meaning of Mallarmé's sonnet, are not essential to my enjoyment of the poem.

I have held the view, and expressed it here and there in essays for many years past, that a poet does better to take over his "philosophy" from the philosophers, than to invent his own. This comes down to a simple division of function: the genius for conceptual formulation and abstraction,

which the greatest philosophers possess, and the genius for transmuting a philosophy into poetry, were in my opinion quite distinct: it would be a miracle, and almost a monstrosity, for the two gifts, to the point of genius, to co-exist within the same mind. On this ground, I exalted the poems of Lucretius and Dante at the expense of the philosophical books of Blake; and I even went so far as to maintain that an inferior, fragmentary or chaotic philosophy could serve a great poet, in certain circumstances, as well as a more dignified one; for otherwise we should be obliged, for this reason alone, to admit the inferiority of Shakespeare to Dante.[10]

I now believe that I have seen a little farther into the matter. I am inclined to think that we may mean two quite different things, when we speak of the "philosophy" of a poet: first, a philosophy which he either takes over, or has attempted to devise for himself in the language of philosophy, and another "philosophy" which can only be expressed in the language of poetry, and which is, in the truest sense, the poet's own contribution. Certain observations of Professor Pieper of Muenster, on the relation of the philosophic to the poetic activity, have encouraged me in this view.[11] When we study the Aristotelian and Thomist metaphysic, for the purpose of understanding Dante better, we are increasing our knowledge, certainly, but it is knowledge of origins, of the material which went to form the poem. But the philosophy of Dante qua poet is a different matter from his philosophy qua student of the philosophers. If, for instance, we read certain of the more philosophic passages of the *Purgatorio*, for instance, translating them back into the terms of the *De Anima* of Aristotle, we may simply marvel that the poet has been able to make poetry of such austere and refractory matter. But the fact that it has been transmuted into poetry means that we are no longer in the same world of discourse as that of Dante's philosophical masters. On the other hand, this view of the matter explains to me my disappointment in the interpretations of Mallarmé. The philosophy of a poet cannot be translated into conceptual terms. What we do, when we make this attempt with Dante, is to shift our attention from Dante to Aristotle and Thomas, and to give Dante the credit which belongs to the latter. What we do, when we apply the attempt to Mallarmé, is to reduce his poetic philosophy to an inferior conceptual philosophy. In neither case, are we estimating the intellectual achievement of the poet.

By this statement, I do not mean to suggest, either that Mallarmé is as great a poet as Dante, which he certainly is not; or that it is worth while to discuss the work of every poet with reference to his "philosophy." It may be

that I am risking confusion, in my own mind as well as in yours, by using the word "philosophy" in two senses. In the ordinary sense, when we ask "what is the philosophy of so and so?" – mentioning a poet, we expect the answer to be in terms of some philosopher or school of philosophers. If the poet in question is Dante, we answer "Aristotle and Aquinas"; if Lucretius, we reply glibly "the Epicurean philosophy." Or, in the case of a Goethe, we have to use a great many more words: we have to consult all of Goethe's writings, his letters, the reports of his conversation, trace the origin of all his ideas, and attempt to constitute them into an intelligible and coherent whole. But in either case, we are replying as we should to the same question when asked about any person with whom we are acquainted. When asked "what does so and so believe?" we are usually satisfied if we are informed whether he is Catholic, Protestant, Spiritualist, Theosophist or Rationalist, and at the same time are given the name of some political party to which he adheres. We are usually satisfied if we are told what the man professes to believe. If there is an evident contradiction between his profession of belief and his behaviour, we are reduced to conjecture. If we suspect the man of hypocrisy, we may make a likely guess; but if we suspect that his own mind is confused, and that he has not put his beliefs into order, we may say "he doesn't know what he believes." And in few human beings do we find a complete consistency of belief and behaviour; nor, in the greater part of life, is such consistency to be demanded: in one aspect, our beliefs are those ideas and principles which we maintain consciously throughout our life, and on the other hand, our belief at any particular moment is the way in which we behave at that moment. Only, perhaps, in facing and accepting martyrdom, is a man's religious belief completely realised and authenticated.

The difference may be made a little clearer if I cite specifically religious or devotional poetry (Dante escapes from this category). In such poetry the commonest failure occurs when the author's conceptual philosophy is one which he wants to believe, but to which his intellectual assent is not complete. That is the most usual reason for the failure of would-be religious poets. Among the writers of good devotional poetry are those whose belief is genuine and passionate, but in whose work the personality of the author is essential: we share his feelings, we experience our exaltation through him. Of such is George Herbert. In another and higher category I should put St. John of the Cross, in whose poems the emotion is so directly the consequence of the idea that the personality of the author is, somehow, annihilated: in experiencing his poems we seem to be in direct relation

with what he saw, without any mediation through the personality of the author himself.

It would perhaps be best to speak of the "philosophy of the author" when we mean the philosophy which he either adopted from philosophers, or devised for himself qua philosopher; and the "philosophy of the poem" when we mean what is found only in the poem itself and cannot be translated into concepts. It might be helpful if I recalled our point of departure. We started from the ordinary distinction of content and form, and noted that in common terms we may find ourselves enjoying one poem for what the poet is saying, and another poem because of the way in which he says it. In the one case we are inclined to consider the form of expression merely as means, in the other to consider the content merely as material. This is a matter of experience. At the one extreme, we have to ask "why is this a poem, and not versified prose?" and at the other "why is this not nonsense?" I am not here concerned with the limiting cases; but with the question: "what is the relation between the value of a poem and the value of the ideas out of which it is composed?" And I ask this question because of my own experience, specifically as an instance with the poetry of Mallarmé. I do not feel, in reading Mallarmé's poems, that I am enjoying them because of their "form" only: I find the content important. But I feel no impulse to try to explain to myself what a poem of Mallarmé is about; and, as I have said, when I have read explanations of their meaning I have always felt cheated. The Interpreter may be right, on his own plane of discourse; but what I am offered is something different from what I want. In the case of Dante it is something highly respectable in its own kind, a recognisable philosophy; in the case of Mallarmé it is something comparatively trivial. That is the only difference. And I feel that the poet has given me something which has caused in me an enjoyment which I cannot call simply sensuous: he has given me an intellectual exercise and an intellectual delight, which is different from that given me by the prose explanation.

Whether I am justified in referring to the cause of this intellectual pleasure as "the philosophy of the poem" can only be judged by the reception of the phrase by my public [– which is, first of all, yourselves: for, as I have warned you, these reflections have only come to me as the result of meditating upon my title, "Scylla and Charybdis."][12†] Obviously, the phrase "the philosophy of the poem" is not equally applicable to every kind of poem. It is most relevant to the poems of those poets who, if they had not been poets, might have been philosophers. That includes poets who, if they had turned

to philosophy instead of to poetry, might have achieved only a very modest place as philosophers. Among these latter, I do not disguise the fact that I include myself. (For I take it as inevitable, that when a poet theorises about poetry, the kind of poetry upon which his attention is centred is his own kind of poetry. And, as Valéry has said: "il n'est pas de théorie qui ne soit un fragment, soigneusement préparé, de quelque autobiographie.")[13]

When I speak of "the philosophy of a poem," then, I have in mind primarily a poem by a poet who has pursued philosophic studies, and who has even elaborated philosophic theories of his own. These have played an important part in his formation, and will make their appearance in his poetry, but in a form in which they are no longer maintained as theories, but presented as something experienced, and go to compose, together with his experience of life of all other kinds, the material of his poem. Different philosophies, or opposed philosophical opinions which cannot in the philosophical area of discourse be maintained at once, may thus be united and poetically reconciled. I should say, furthermore, that in this operation there is an intellectual work of organisation, which is analogous to the work of the conceptual philosopher. And I should maintain that the experience of the sensitive reader, in assimilating such a poem, is analogous in kind to his experience in assimilating the work of a philosopher. Only, understanding, with a philosophic work and with a poem, is a very different thing. It is owing to the misunderstanding of the fact that there is more than one kind of understanding, that we have inflicted upon us so many false explanations of philosophical poetry: those in fact, which reduce the philosophy of a poem to conceptual terms: whether of the poet's philosophical masters, or of his own thought when he was philosophising and not writing a poem.

With regard to the conceptual philosophy which a poet borrows from philosophers, or invents for himself qua philosopher, there are reservations to be made. The considerations I have been discussing are not, of course, equally applicable to every type of poetry, nor are they equally important in every poem of the same type. They are applicable to the degree in which philosophical ideas have contributed to forming the poet's mind and have been digested into (we might say composted into) that profound *couche*[14] of experience which constitutes the soil in which the germs of his poetry are nourished. They are peculiarly applicable when the matter of a poem, rich with philosophical ingredients, is organised into a structural design. But neither the presence of such elements, nor their organisation, is a universal condition for all poetry. The value we assign to the poem in which they are

found has no direct relation to our valuation of the original ideas in their conceptual forms: it is possible not only to make a bad poem out of the greatest philosophy, but a very fine poem out of a philosophy which, put abstractly, is almost negligible. Otherwise, we should have to assert, if we are Christians, that Dante is a greater poet than Homer or Virgil, Racine a greater dramatist than Sophocles; which would be manifestly absurd. The greatness of any particular poetry depends upon many things; among others upon the greatness of the language in which the poet writes; depends, therefore, upon the other poets who have previously written in the same language. It is hard, but I believe true, that some poet of limited gifts, who has the advantage of a great language, may be more important for the world than another poet, more richly endowed by nature, who has had to work in a language in itself of lower status in the world at large.

I come at last to a particular case of poetry which, in the sense which I have been trying to indicate, may be called philosophical. When I alluded, a little while ago, to Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, that was not only for its illustrative value in that context, but with a view to a comparison I am about to draw. I cannot recall ever having read a comparative analysis of Gray's *Elegy* and *Le Cimetière Marin*, although I should be very surprised to learn that no one had yet drawn the parallel. An English poet of the 18th Century, and a French poet of the 20th, have both written poems of meditation in a cemetery – each, the finest poem on this subject in its language. Each is a poem which anyone must know, who has any pretension to acquaintance with the poetry of that language. The comparison is peculiarly interesting in the present context.

Gray's poem is, of course, the perfection of an idiom and a versification which was a common style of poets of his time, and which had been brought to that point of excellence by a century of practice. Valéry's poem, on the other hand, is striking, from the first reading, by the triumphant boldness of its technical originality.[15] I speak with diffidence, but I should suppose that in this poem of Valéry there is to be found a refreshment of French metric from Italian sources.[16] I have spoken of Gray's *Elegy* as the distinguished expression of the commonplace. In Valéry's poem there are commonplaces – in what great poem are there not? – but there is a great difference between a poem in which commonplaces occur, and a poem based on the commonplace. Such a line as

La larve file où se formaient des pleurs[17]

or even

Tout va sous terre et rentre dans le jeu[18]

has all the force of the commonplace thought expressed in words which no one has found before: as with lines of Gray, I feel a kind of wonder and admiration as at a miracle of resuscitation of the dead. There are interesting differences on the same plane:

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn[19]

and

Les cris aigus des filles chatouillées –[20]

there is more difference here than the difference between the 18th and the 20th centuries, or even between what can be said in the two languages. But is there any important difference of type between the two poems?

The difference is fundamental. The content of Gray's poem, as I have said, consists chiefly of ideas which have occurred to all men in all languages at all times. Hence its structure is merely the plausible sequence by which one such thought leads to another. Valéry's poem has what I call the philosophic structure: an organisation, not merely of successive responses to the situation, but of further responses to his own responses. He has put more of himself into the poem – to that point at which the surrendering of the maximum of one's being to the poem ends by arriving at the maximum of impersonality.[21]

Valéry solved the problem of Scylla and Charybdis in his own way, and because of his own peculiar combination of gifts. I cannot think of any other poet who could so certainly, if he had taken that course, have distinguished himself as a philosopher in the non-poetic sense. I can easily imagine him, had he made that choice in early life, as pursuing a course which would have led him to the Collège de France and such audiences as flocked, forty years ago, to the lectures of Henri Bergson.[22] His parentage with Mallarmé seems to me exaggerated, or at least to be sometimes regarded as if he had no other lines of descent. His mind, in my opinion, was far more philosophical than that of Mallarmé, or than that of Edgar Poe to whom both poets have paid such generous tribute.[23] Having turned to poetry, he achieved the miracle of writing poetry in which the approximation between the two modes of philosophising which I have tried to determine, the conceptual and the poetic, comes closer than in the work of any other poet. He remains a poet, because

the translation of the content of any of his poems into conceptual terms converts it into something else – and something else of less value.

In remarking this unique character of Valéry's poetry I am not implying that he reached, or came nearer towards some goal towards which all poetry ought to strive, than anyone else. I have said nothing about his relative greatness compared to other poets. I only say of him that he explored what no one else has explored: and if a poet gives us a few poems (for I rate *La Jeune Parque* and *Le Cimetière Marin* as his triumphs) in which he has realised some potentiality of poetry as no one else has done or is likely to do, that, in itself, is glory.

Let me return to my two marine monsters. If a poet gives us the impression that he is employing his gifts to persuade us to accept a particular theory, or if on the other hand he seems to be exploiting, irresponsibly, a theory or a belief as material to make poetry out of, he will equally suffer shipwreck and destruction. The philosopher tries to make us see one aspect of reality; the poet tries to make us see another. These are two modes of contemplation: persuasion and propaganda belong to quite another universe of discourse. And yet there is one reservation to be made. Scylla and Charybdis cannot be escaped merely by having a good chart of the channel. Not all poets are equally conscious of what they are doing: and it may happen sometimes, that a poet succeeds in writing a fine poem with the wrong intentions. If his compass is in error, he may even, in laying his course directly for Scylla or directly for Charybdis, have the good fortune to pass triumphantly between them.

I should have liked to embark upon an examination of the Scylla and Charybdis of the dramatist – or even to proceed into more dangerous seas, and consider the Scylla and Charybdis of the politician which may be named ideology and expediency. But I must leave you to your own reflections on these matters, for I have, as lecturer, my own Scylla and Charybdis to avoid. I have escaped the Scylla of brevity, but I am in danger of the Charybdis of tedium. Between the abstract and the concrete, between compression and diffuseness, between the trivial and the dull – I have had a difficult passage.[24†]

TEXTUAL NOTES

1. The opening paragraph in *Annales* reads:

Il y a deux façons possibles d'aborder la composition d'une conférence ou d'un discours. On peut commencer par avoir, du moins en théorie, un certain nombre d'idées claires et distinctes, qui se

sont déjà disposées dans leur ordre normal. Ou bien on peut avoir dans l'esprit un nombre confus d'idées qui ont peut-être quelques rapports entre elles, rendant possible un tout bien organisé. Il y a d'habitude une idée dominante, et pour la soutenir et la développer, le futur auteur en rassemble d'autres, parmi ces dernières il doit s'efforcer de choisir celles qui, une fois incorporées dans le contexte de la première notion, auront avec elle une relation plausible pour l'esprit de ses auditeurs ; et il doit exclure celles dont les affinités n'existent que dans son esprit, celles qui, pour les autres, n'ont que la relation accidentelle d'être conçues par le même individu. Dans ce processus de sélection et d'exclusion, d'autres idées viennent à l'esprit, provoquées par la nouvelle juxtaposition de celles déjà émises. La conclusion, le produit définitif sous forme d'essai ou de discours contient donc un élément de surprise pour l'auteur lui-même.

This initial paragraph is crossed out in pencil on the TS:

There are two ways in which one may approach the writing of a lecture or address. One may, at least in theory, begin by having a number of clear and distinct ideas already arranged in the right sequence. Or one may have in mind a confused number of ideas, which have possibly some relation to each other such that they can be formed into an orderly whole. There is usually one dominant idea, in support and development of which the prospective author summons others; amongst these he must endeavour to select those which, when presented in the context of the first notion, will have a plausible relation to it for the minds of his auditors; and he must exclude those whose affinity exists only in his own mind – those which, for other people, will have only the accidental relationship of being entertained by the same individual. In this process of selection and rejection, fresh ideas come into the mind, provoked by the new juxtaposition of those already present. The conclusion, the final product in the form of essay or address, has thus an element of surprise for the author himself.

2. The following two paragraphs in *Annales* explaining the choice of the title "Scylla and Charybdis" were omitted in the 1962 revision (for the English original, see 7.692):

D'où l'importance du titre dès le début. On commence par choisir un titre afin de s'assurer soi-même qu'on a un sujet : car un titre est un substitut : l'ombre d'un sujet en quelque sorte. Or, dans le cas de la conférence que je fais en ce moment devant vous, le rapport du titre au sujet et de ceux-ci à l'ensemble de l'œuvre, constitue un exemple particulier. Comme vous devez déjà l'avoir remarqué avec quelque impatience, je suis curieux du processus de composition d'un écrit : je suis d'autant plus tenté de satisfaire cette curiosité dans les circonstances présentes, que le Centre Universitaire Méditerranéen, dans mon esprit, s'associe de très près au nom de ce grand explorateur de la pensée, du sentiment et du langage : Paul Valéry.[2a] Je vais donc tout d'abord vous révéler que non seulement le titre de cette conférence en a précédé le sujet, mais ce titre lui-même est dû à un malentendu. Dans ma correspondance avec votre Président, M. Émile Henriot, je me plaignais des difficultés que je trouve toujours à décider de quoi je vais parler devant un auditoire inconnu et je m'écriais par parenthèse « Charybde et Scylla : Éviter à la fois la lourdeur et la frivolité ». Votre Président eut l'impression que j'offrais cette exclamation comme sujet et me répondit sur-le-champ que cela lui semblait une excellente idée et qu'il annoncerait donc le titre sous cette forme. Je ne le repris pas tout de suite, parce que je voulais attendre d'avoir pensé à

quelque chose d'autre. Et puis je me dis : « Pourquoi pas, ce titre me semble excellent ! ». Ce mythe appartient à ce monde méditerranéen dont notre culture est sortie. Il fait allusion à un épisode très connu dans la préhistoire méditerranéenne ; comme certains autres mythes dans l'histoire d'Ulysse, c'est ce que le professeur Jung appellerait, je crois, un archétype universel de l'expérience humaine.[2b] Ce mythe exprime quelques-uns des désirs, des craintes et des terreurs les plus profonds de tout être humain : c'est l'expérience même de la vie. Il peut s'appliquer à presque tous les sujets possibles. Ce titre m'ayant été imposé, je me lançai avec ardeur à l'exploration de mon propre esprit, curieux des découvertes que je pourrais y faire.

Je me mis alors à considérer la signification du mythe « Charybde et Scylla » en poésie ; car j'ai toujours constaté que pour capter l'attention d'un auditoire, il vaut mieux commencer par un sujet qu'on est censé connaître ; si nous pouvons donner l'impression en débutant que nous parlons par expérience et avec quelque poids, les auditeurs se laisseront plus volontiers persuader d'accepter notre opinion sur d'autres sujets où notre autorité est plus contestable.[2c] Je fus frappé tout de suite par le fait que . . .

3. TSE's twenty-eight page typescript of "Scylla and Charybdis" dated "February, 1952," with holograph emendations in Valerie Fletcher's hand, is in the Hayward Bequest (P32), King's College. Also included in the file is a one-page synopsis of the lecture and a twenty-five page typescript draft with TSE's holograph corrections.

NOTES

1. As printed in *Les Prix Nobel de littérature*. Monaco: Union européenne d'éditions, 1962. Pp. 439; 185-[203]. An address delivered in English at the Centre universitaire méditerranéen (CUM) in Nice as "Scylla and Charybdis" on 25 Mar 1952.

TSE was first invited to give a lecture in Nice in 1949 by Émile Henriot, manager of the CUM and president of the Alliance française. TSE replied on 14 Sept that various other engagements in 1949 and 1950 prevented him from accepting the invitation, while expressing the "desire to be of service to the Centre Universitaire, as well as always to the Alliance Française." The lecture was written between mid-Jan and mid-Feb 1952, as TSE wrote to Geoffrey Faber on 5 Feb that "This has taken my spare time for three weeks past, and the lecture is not quite finished" and on 13 Feb to Denis Saurat, who was his host in Nice: "I have now written one, and my secretary is making a fair copy so that you may have it in legible form. I am not very pleased with it, but I hope that it will do. I find, as time goes on, that I seem to have less and less to say." The lecture was first published in French as "Charybde et Scylla: Lourdeur et frivolité" [Scylla and Charybdis: Frivolity and Dullness], *Annales du Centre universitaire méditerranéen*, 5 (1951-52), 71-82 (hereafter *Annales*). The English text was printed posthumously as "Scylla and Charybdis" in *Agenda*, 23 (Spring/Summer 1985), 5-21.

François-Joachim Beer wrote to TSE on 30 May 1960 requesting his permission to reprint the essay in a volume containing works by Nobel laureates in Literature, among them Pär Lagerkvist, Halldor Laxness, and François Mauriac. TSE gave permission on 1 June but specified on 24 June that he did not possess a copy of the text in either French or English. He evidently gave the only copies he had, now in King's, to John Hayward (see textual note 3). TSE subsequently received a copy of the French address as printed in *Annales* and approved it for republication, after he or Beer removed the opening paragraph and the section explaining the choice of title (in

brackets in the English text). TSE wrote to Beer on 24 Mar 1961 returning the corrected proofs of the essay: "If the original title *Charybde et Scylla* does not meet with your approval I wonder whether *Le dilemme poétique* would not do? The title *Philosophie de la Poésie* seems to me somewhat pretentious and misleading since this is not a comprehensive aesthetic of poetry. But I leave the matter finally to your discretion."

2. On the TS, this opening sentence is in Valerie Fletcher's hand. The opening paragraph on the TS was crossed out in pencil but included in *Annales*; both versions are reproduced at the end of the essay (see textual note 1).

TSE wrote to Denis Saurat on 26 Feb: "I am sending simultaneously under separate cover, the English text for my lecture. Now that my secretary has made a fair copy, I am afraid that the lecture is going to be too long. I think, in any case, that the opening is improved by my cutting out most of the first page, and substituting the sentence which I have inserted in pencil."

2a. In 1933, Paul Valéry had been appointed as the first manager of the CUM and was therefore Émile Henriot's predecessor in that role.

2b. In Book XII of Homer's *Odyssey*, Scylla and Charybdis are dangerous sea monsters located on either side of the Strait of Messina, between Sicily and the Italian peninsula. According to Carl Jung, archetypes are universal concepts in the collective unconscious that appear in dreams, literature, art, or religion. These include the mother, the wise old man, the child, the explorer, the warrior, the hero, and so forth.

2c. The section from "if we can give the impression" to "our authority is more contestable" is crossed out on the TS but included in *Annales*.

2d. The two paragraphs in brackets were omitted in the 1962 revision but included in the French translation printed in *Annales*, which is reproduced in textual note 2 (7.706-07).

3. TSE wrote to the editor of the *NEW* on 25 Jan 1945: "In the first section of *The Dry Salvages*, 'hermit crab' should be 'horse-shoe crab.' It was, of course, the horse-shoe crab that I had in mind: the slip must have been due to the fact that I did not want a spondee in that place. What is more curious is that the term 'hermit crab' should have continued to do duty for 'horse-shoe crab' in my mind, in this context, from the date of original publication of the poem until last week. I shall be grateful to any of your readers who may possess the poem, if they will kindly make the alteration" (6.586). TSE's further discussions of the error are recorded in *Poems1*, 966-67; the correction to "horseshoe crab" was first made in the (UK) third impression of *Four Quartets* in Aug 1945 (*Poems2* 504). Some American editions, notably Harcourt's *Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950*, have retained "hermit crab."

4. The *Dictionnaire de la langue française* by Émile Littré (1801-81), known as the "Littré," is a French dictionary first printed by Hachette between 1863 and 1872.

5. For a detailed discussion of the process of composition of this line from *Little Gidding* II, see Helen Gardner, *The Composition of "Four Quartets"* (London: Faber, 1978), 177-78, and *Poems1*, 1009-11.

6. Henri Bremond's books *Prière et poésie* [*Prayer and Poetry*] (1926), reviewed in the *Criterion* of July 1929 by Mario Praz, and *La Poésie pure* [*Pure Poetry*] (1926) sparked a debate about the purity of formal expression in poetry. In *From Poe to Valéry* (1948), TSE argued: "This process of increasing self-consciousness – or, we may say, of increasing consciousness of language – has as its theoretical goal what we may call *la poésie pure*. I believe it to be a goal that can never be reached, because I think that poetry is only poetry so long as it preserves some

'impurity' in this sense: that is to say, so long as the subject matter is valued for its own sake" (7.300).

The French term *engagement* originates in the 1940s existentialist philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre. Often translated as "commitment," it describes "the action of addressing or actively involving oneself with social and political questions as the focus or purpose of literary or artistic endeavour" (OED).

7. *Trans*: nothing is more beautiful than the commonplace; *read*: "rien de plus beau que le lieu commun." From section LXXVI of *Mon cœur mis à nu* [*My Heart Laid Bare*], in *Œuvres posthumes et correspondances inédites* (Paris: Quantin, 1887), 121.

8. Mallarmé's poem *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* [*A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance*] (1897), and the incomplete philosophical story *Igitur*, begun in 1869 and published posthumously in 1925.

9†. The phrase "and a sonnet of Mallarmé while paying conscious attention only to the way in which he says it" was omitted in both versions of the French translation, possibly by accident.

10. Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* "is naked philosophy," TSE wrote in "William Blake" (1920). "But Blake's occasional marriages of poetry and philosophy are not so felicitous. . . . The borrowed philosophy of Dante and Lucretius is perhaps not so interesting, but it injures their form less. Blake did not have that more Mediterranean gift of form which knows how to borrow, as Dante borrowed his theory of the soul; he must needs create a philosophy as well as a poetry" (2.189-90).

11. In *Leisure the Basis of Culture* (London: Faber, 1952), to which TSE had recently written the introduction (7.654), Pieper discusses the relation between poetry and philosophy and argues that "poetry and philosophy are more closely related to one another than any of the sciences to philosophy" (95).

12†. The sentence in brackets in the English original was omitted in the 1962 revision but included in *Annales*: "et ce public, c'est d'abord vous-même: car, je vous en ai avertis, ces réflexions me sont venues comme suite à mes méditations sur mon titre *Charybde et Scylla*."

13. "Poésie et pensée abstraite" (1939), *Variété V* (Paris: Gallimard, 1944), 136. *Trans*: There is no theory which is not a fragment, carefully prepared, of some autobiography.

14. *couche*: layer, stratum

15. When discussing C. Day Lewis's translation of Valéry's poem, *The Graveyard by the Sea* (1945), and the version by Desmond Harmsworth, TSE explained to the latter on 23 Nov 1956 : "There is, of course, one obvious shortcoming, or at least one obvious feature of the original which neither you nor Day Lewis has attempted to represent. That is simply that the verbal effect in French is largely due to Valéry's use of a metre which is unusual and somewhat eccentric in the French language: that is the iambic pentameter, which happens to be a perfectly normal metric in English. To a French ear, therefore, the original must have a very different sound from that of either your or Day Lewis's translation, to an English ear."

16. TSE earlier pointed out in *From Poe to Valéry* (1948) that "Valéry's second language, the influence of which is perceptible in some of his verse, was Italian" (7.298). Valéry used to spend his summer holidays in Genoa as a child. His Italian mother, Fanny Grassi, spoke Italian to him and sang lullabies in her native Genoese dialect.

17. *Le Cimetière marin*, stanza 15. *Trans*: "Grubs thread their way where tears were once composed." Translated by C. Day Lewis in *The Complete Poems of C. Day Lewis*, ed. Jill Balcon (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992), 411.

18. Stanza 16; *trans*: "All go to earth, go back into the game" (411)

19. "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," l. 17

20. Stanza 16; *trans*: "The bird-sharp cries of girls whom love is teasing" (411)

21. TSE wrote at the end of "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919): "The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done" (2.112).

22. TSE, who attended Bergson's weekly lectures in early 1911, recalled their popularity in "What France Means to You" (1944): "Je suppose qu'il y a encore des bergsoniens: mais pour avoir vraiment connu la ferveur bergsonienne, il faut être allé, régulièrement, chaque semaine, dans cette salle pleine à craquer où il faisait ses cours, au Collège de France. (Il fallait arriver cinq quarts d'heure à l'avance." *Trans*: "I suppose there are still some Bergsonians, but in order to have really known the Bergsonian mania, one should have gone regularly, every week, to that crammed lecture hall where he gave his lectures at the Collège de France. One had to arrive an hour and a quarter early" (6.512, 514).

23. Mallarmé learnt English in order to read Poe and translated some of his poems into French, notably "The Raven" [*Le Corbeau*] in 1875; he paid tribute to him "Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe" [The Tomb of Edgar Poe] in 1876. TSE quoted Valéry's praise of Poe in *From Poe to Valéry* (1948): "I prize the theories of Poe, so profound and so insidiously learned" (7.299) and discussed Valéry's admiration for Poe's *Eureka* (7.302).

24†. The last sentence is crossed out on the TS but included in *Annales* as well as the 1962 version. The section from "But I must leave you" to "the Charybdis of tedium" reads in *Annales*: "Mais je dois maintenant vous laisser à vos propres réflexions sur ces sujets, car j'ai moi-même ici, en tant que conférencier, à éviter à la fois Charybde et Scylla. J'ai échappé à Charybde, la trop grande concision; mais je suis maintenant en danger de Scylla: la longueur, l'ennui." This is omitted in the 1962 text and replaced with "Mais je dois moi-même éviter à la fois Charybde et Scylla" [But I myself must avoid both Scylla and Charybdis].

Foreword to *Contemporary French Poetry*, by Joseph Chiari

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1952. Pp. xvi + 180; Foreword, vii-xi.[1]

A critical introduction to contemporary poetry may take one of two forms, according to the degree of knowledge of the material that may be attributed to the audience addressed. If the poets to be discussed are almost unknown, the critic's chief service is to bring their work to the notice of readers who are likely to appreciate them; and his critical acumen will be most appropriately exhibited by copious and well-chosen quotation. His main task is to persuade his readers that his poets deserve their attention, and to send them eagerly to the poetry itself. If, however, the authors are already known, his aim may be to help readers who have some acquaintance with their work to read more intelligently and analytically, to modify their earlier opinions, and to perceive more accurately the virtues and defects of writers already accepted as important.[2]

The area which Mr. Chiari has chosen to cover obliges him to employ both of these methods. Two of his poets, Valéry and Claudel, authors of an older generation, are already famous in this country as they are in France: there exist a number of translations of both the verse and the prose of Valéry, and at least two of Claudel's plays have been presented to London audiences.[3] Two of his poets belong to a middle generation – Supervielle and Perse – but their work is not yet so widely known in this country as it should be.[4] The work of a still younger generation – that of such men as Éluard, Emmanuel, and Michaux – is known only to those readers of poetry in England who endeavour to acquaint themselves with new French verse while the poets' reputations are still in the making at home.[5]

I am tempted to draw a comparison here between the task which Mr. Chiari has set himself, and that undertaken half a century ago by Arthur Symons in *The Symbolist Movement in French Literature*. Symons did perform the function of bringing important poets to the attention of English readers; and for that reason his book will remain a landmark.[6] As criticism I cannot say that Symons's book stands the test of time. He omitted one or two poets of the first importance – notably Tristan Corbière; he included one or two writers – Maeterlinck and Villiers de l'Isle Adam

– whose reputation is now somewhat diminished;[7] and even when he admired the right authors, one cannot say that it was always for the right reason. My reason for mentioning Symons's book, however, is to point a difference between the poetry of the epoch which he treated, and that considered by Mr. Chiari: a difference which renders the task of the latter much the more difficult.

With all the abundance and variety of the French poetry of the period to which we attach the phrase "the Symbolist movement" – and the difference of aim, technique and idiom between such poets as Corbière, Laforgue, Mallarmé, and Rimbaud is amazing – there is a certain unity which makes it manageable as a whole. It is not so easy to say in what the unity consists: for the more closely we examine the meaning of the term "Symbolism" the more it comes to seem merely a convenient label, and not a defining term. In part, the unity is due to a common derivation from Baudelaire: but the poets whom I have named were anything but epigoni, and what is interesting is not so much what they got from Baudelaire, but what they made of it. The unity is, in any case, felt; and the contrast makes us more aware of our own period – that which Mr. Chiari has under review – as one in which common directions have been lacking.

Whereas, therefore, Arthur Symons could treat certain poets as forming, between them, the outline of a period, so that he had no need to refer to a number of admirable poets much of whose work has permanent value (I mention in passing only the names of Verhaeren, Jammes, Samain,[8] Tailhade, Kahn, Régnier, Vielé-Griffin), Mr. Chiari cannot assign to any of his poets the same representative function. He has, I think rightly, made no attempt to discuss all the poets of the last forty years; he has omitted some of great distinction. His selection has had to be of those poets whose work he finds most sympathetic; and, as a personal choice, it omits a number of names one or another of which the informed reader will miss. But to have been otherwise, his book would have had to be conceived on a much larger scale; it might have become only one of those comprehensive scholarly chronicles which seem to exist only to preserve dull writers from complete oblivion. Had he attempted to perform this task, I do not think that I should have been much interested in the result. I therefore cannot repine at the absence of, for instance, Henri Franck, whose poems deserve a greater fame than they have ever enjoyed.[9] In the same way I only mention the absence of Guillaume Apollinaire (in some ways the most representative poet of one type); and the absence of several significant figures of the twenties

– Cocteau, André Salmon, and Max Jacob.[10] I could wish that more space could have been given to St. John Perse, not only for the intrinsic value of his poems, but because I think he will prove to have had a greater influence upon Anglo-American verse than is yet recognized. And there are, as Mr. Chiari admits in his preface, other younger poets besides Éluard and Michaux who deserve a place.[11] But I mention such omissions only in support of my contention that the nature of the period with which Mr. Chiari is concerned is such as to compel, in any treatment of this kind, a selection which may appear somewhat arbitrary.

For the period itself is one which, until it can be reviewed in a much longer perspective, must be left unexplained: it cannot be exposed to the reader in a neat and intelligible order. Even if we consider only the two eldest and most famous of the poets whose work Mr. Chiari examines, it is difficult to think of Paul Valéry and Paul Claudel as contemporaries. Their technique, their aims, their view of life are in striking contrast. Even their comparative chronology is paradoxical. In 1910, when I had my first introduction to literary Paris, Claudel was already a great poet in the eyes of a younger generation – my own generation. He had published *Connaissance de l'Est*, *Art poétique*, and those plays which appeared in one volume under the general title of *L'Arbre*: and I am not sure that these three books do not constitute his strongest claim to immortality.[12] Paul Valéry, if known at all, was known only as a minor, late Symbolist poet whose work was represented in the standard anthology of Symbolist verse, *Poètes d'Aujourd'hui* of Van Bever and Léautaud.[13] It was only in 1917, after the publication of *La Jeune Parque*, that his name was suddenly illuminated with glory; yet curiously enough, while Claudel still remained known only to few readers in England, the fame of Valéry spread as quickly as that of Proust.[14] Finally, when Valéry died, in 1945, his death seemed to mark the end of an age, with greater definitiveness and solemnity than that of any other European author of his generation could have done.[15] What Valéry represented, in his total *œuvre* – for his poetry and his critical and speculative prose form one inseparable whole – was the perfection, the culmination of a type of civilized mind which becomes, to the post-war world, increasingly alien. While the work of Claudel remains, for better or worse, closer to the state of mind of the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century.

When we turn to the representatives of the middle generation, we find equally little relation between the two poets whom Mr. Chiari has chosen, Jules Supervielle and St. John Perse. And neither of them can be associated

with either of their great predecessors. I am very glad that Mr. Chiari chose these two poets, for there are no two poets of their generation in France of whose permanence I feel more assured. But what generalizations can we make, from the work of Valéry, Claudel, Supervielle, and Perse, together with the younger writers such as Emmanuel and Michaux and half a dozen others who were worthy of inclusion, about the place and function of poetry today? It would be impossible to erect an *art poétique* of the achievements of French poetry in the twentieth century. Perhaps it is as imprudent to attempt to define the condition of poetry today in any one language as it would be to generalize about the condition of poetry everywhere. But at least, when we confine our attention to the poetry of one language, we can speak of it in the more manageable terms of the technical problem. Confining ourselves to these terms, we can I think speak of the present situation of French poetry as corresponding to a *crisis of prosody*. It is a period in which each poet is engaged in his own private experiments and explorations in the endeavour to find the right vehicle, the right vocabulary, and the right versification. Eventually, out of these struggles – and only the poet himself knows how arduous, agonizing, and solitary such effort must be in our time – a common style may emerge in the poetry of a generation to come. Meanwhile, the struggle itself is of the greatest significance for all those readers, in other countries and of other languages, who know that without poetry civilization cannot flourish.[16]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The Corsican critic, poet, and diplomat Joseph Chiari (1911-89) moved to Britain in 1938 to write a doctoral dissertation on Imagism in poetry, particularly in TSE's early verse. He met TSE in 1943 through their mutual friend Denis Saurat. When Chiari, who had been teaching at the University of Manchester since 1949, learned that Manchester UP would publish *Contemporary French Poetry*, he asked TSE to write a prefatory note. "I am prepared to consider this in your case," he replied on 9 May 1950, but not until 21 Mar 1951 did he reveal in a letter to Herbert Read that he had to write "a short Preface to a book by little Joe Chiari" (Victoria). On 26 Aug TSE wrote to Chiari inquiring about the proofs of the book, "which has been so long delayed." It was finally published on 18 Apr 1952.

Chiari authored some thirty books, including the monograph *T. S. Eliot: Poet and Dramatist* (1972). In *T. S. Eliot: A Memoir* (London: Enitharmon Press, 1982), he described him as "an affectionate and loyal friend" (3) and recounted how Sir Herbert Grierson read his *Contemporary French Poetry* and suggested he send it to TSE. "I followed his advice and Eliot liked it and wrote a preface to the book which was subsequently published in London and in New York" (23).

2. TSE had written to Chiari on 3 Jan 1950 commenting on an early draft of the book: "For those who do not know these poets – and there will be few readers who are acquainted with the work of all of them – the book is an introduction, and the alert readers will want to acquaint themselves at first hand with the work of one or another poet."

3. Claudel's plays *L'Annonce faite à Marie* (1912), *L'Échange* (1914), and *L'Ôtage* (1914) were produced in London as *The Tidings Brought to Mary* and *The Exchange* by the Pioneer Players in 1915 and 1916, and as *The Hostage* in 1919, with Sybil Thorndike. More recently, *Partage de midi* (1916) was seen during the 1951 Festival of Britain at the St. James Theatre in London. TSE had included *The Tidings Brought to Mary* in the list of books for his 1916 "Course of Six Lectures on Modern French Literature" (1.475).

4. Chiari opens his chapter on the Uruguayan-born French poet Jules Supervielle (1884-1960) by stating that "SUPERVIELLE is with Villon and Verlaine the French poet who comes nearest to the accepted English idea of poetry" (45). TSE had written to Jean de Menasce on 3 May 1924 that "I have never met Supervielle nor read any of his work, although I have heard much of him" (*L2* 403). TSE's translation of Saint-John Perse's poem *Anabase* appeared in 1930 (see 4.132).

5. TSE suggested in 1953 that the work of the French Surrealist poet Paul Éluard, nom de plume of Eugène Émile Paul Grindel (1895-1952), would be reduced to "a few very moving short poems preserved in anthologies" (7.775). Chiari described the French Christian poet Noël Mathieu (1916-84), who wrote under the pseudonym Pierre Emmanuel, as "the most important of France's younger poets" (97). The Belgian-born French poet and painter Henri Michaux (1899-1984), was best known for his travelogue *Un barbare en Asie* [*A Barbarian in Asia*] (1932) and the poetry collection *Plume* (1938).

6. TSE had come upon Arthur Symons's second edition (1908) of *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899) in the library of the Harvard Union in 1908. In his review of Peter Quennell's *Baudelaire and the Symbolists* (1929), TSE drew a similar parallel between Quennell's work and Symons's: "Mr. Quennell has done for his generation what Arthur Symons did many years ago with his *Symbolist Movement in Literature*. . . . it was a very good book for its time; it did make the reader want to read the poets Mr. Symons wrote about" (4.11).

7. In his review of Quennell's *Baudelaire and the Symbolists*, TSE expressed his reservations about the inclusion of Maurice Maeterlinck and Villiers de l'Isle-Adam: "it was time that a new book on the same subject should be written, omitting, as does Mr. Quennell very rightly, Maeterlinck. . . . I complain against Mr. Quennell that he ought to have ignored Villiers, except as a footnote upon others" (4.11, 12).

8. Albert Victor Samain (1858-1900), French Symbolist poet who helped Alfred Vallette, Remy de Gourmont, and other Symbolists revive the lapsed eighteenth-century literary magazine and publishing house *Mercure de France* in 1890.

9. TSE wrote in his *Criterion* commentary of Apr 1934: "something was expected of Henri Franck, the early deceased author of *La Danse devant l'arche*" (5.80). He was presented with a later edition (1921) of this volume, signed "T. S. Eliot (from Pierre Maury) 1946."

10. The French poet Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) was best known for his collection of poems *Alcools* (1913) and the posthumous collection of concrete poems *Calligrammes* (1918). He frequented the literary circles of the Latin Quarter in Paris and lived in the Bateau-Lavoir with Picasso and the poets and critics André Salmon (1881-1969) and Max Jacob (1876-1944), among others.

11. Chiari stated in his preface: "If I have left out poets like Jules Romains, Charles Vildrac, Soupault, Jean-Paul [i.e., Léon-Paul] Fargue, Jarry, Jean Paulhan, Frénaud, St. Pol Roux, Césaire, Jean Tardieu, R. Dénos, Prévert, René Char, and others, it is because I have mainly set about to describe some landmarks and not to survey the whole of French contemporary poetry" (xv).

12. In "The Borderline of Prose" (1917), TSE praised *Connaissance de l'Est* (1900-07), a collection of sixty-two prose poems written mainly during Claudel's time as French consul in China (1895-99), as "very fine prose" (1.542), and included the English translation *The East I Know* (1914) in the reading list for his course on Modern French Literature (1.475). *Art poétique* (1907) is a collection of three essays: "Connaissance du temps," "Traité de la connaissance au monde et de soi-même," and "Développement de l'Église." *L'Arbre* (1901), a collection of five early plays that show a Symbolist influence, consists of *Tête d'or*, *La Ville*, and *La Jeune Fille violaine* (all in two versions) as well as the previously unpublished *L'Échange* and *Le Repos du septième jour*.

13. Paul Léautaud (1872-1956) co-edited with his school friend Adolphe Van Bever (1871-1925) the anthology *Poètes d'aujourd'hui, 1880-1900. Morceaux choisis* (1900). In 1918 TSE had compared this anthology unfavorably with the *Little Review* anthology of modern French poets: "I know of only the van Bever and Léautaud collection in two volumes; and this is too big, too indiscriminate, and does not display the most important of the poets so adequately as the *Little Review*" (1.719).

14. In 1917, having not printed anything for nearly twenty years, Valéry broke his "great silence" by publishing *La Jeune Parque*. TSE recalled in "Leçon de Valéry" (1946): "As the author of *La Jeune Parque* . . . he was a famous man in 1924" (6.753).

15. TSE had similarly remarked in "Leçon de Valéry": "'*L'Europe est finie*': Valéry's Europe is certainly finished, and I have to acknowledge that it is, in large part, my Europe too. But of all the poets, in any language, of the last thirty years, Valéry was the one with the best right to utter this remark: for it is he who will remain for posterity the representative poet, the symbol of the poet, of the first half of the twentieth century – not Yeats, not Rilke, not anyone else" (6.754-55).

16. TSE stated in his address *The Aims of Poetic Drama* (1949): "This is not an age of a common style or metric among poets: it is a period of considerable variety of individual styles, a period in which each poet must devise his own prosody. . . . In an age of such diverse experimentation, nobody can afford to take over a kind of versification ready made. We can only hope that in the course of a generation or so . . . a common medium will be hammered out, within which there will still be plenty of scope for the expression of widely different poetic personalities" (7.359).

Preface to *The Film of Murder in the Cathedral*, by T. S. Eliot and George Hoellering

London: Faber & Faber, 1952. Pp. 126; Preface, 7-10.[1]

Murder in the Cathedral is, I believe, the first contemporary verse play to be adapted to the screen.[2] That is in itself a justification for publishing this film script, apart from the value and interest of the illustrative matter. It is certainly the only excuse for a preface by the author of the play.

I should like, first of all, to make clear the limits of my collaboration. At the beginning, Mr. Hoellering asked me to make a film recording of the entire play in my own voice. This recording (which was only completed after a number of sessions) was to serve as a guide, for himself and for the actors, to the rhythms and emphases of the verse as I heard it myself. He tells me that he found this recording very useful: I only know that it suggested to him the possibility of using my voice for the words of the Fourth Tempter – after he had had the happy idea of presenting the Fourth Temptation merely as a voice proceeding from an invisible actor. (He did wisely in demanding of me another recording of this voice, made later after the filming of the scene: for no one – certainly not the author – can throw himself completely into any one part, when he is reading all the parts in succession).

After making this first recording, I wrote the preliminary scenes which he told me would be needed to turn the play into an intelligible film. He gave me the subject-matter of these scenes: I had only to provide the words. Of the necessity of these additional scenes I shall have something to say presently. As to the quality of the verse, I should like to say this: that if it seems inferior to that of the original play, I must ask the critic to observe that I had to imitate a style which I had abandoned as unsuitable for other purposes than that of this one play; and that to compose a pastiche of one's own work some years later is almost as difficult as to imitate the work of another writer. If the new lines are judged to be as good as the old ones, that may call into question the value of the play itself as a contribution to poetry; but I shall nevertheless conclude that the additions constitute a successful *tour de force*.

Beyond the execution of these two definite tasks, my collaboration in the making of the film seems to have been limited to frequent discussions with the producer, in which I accepted nearly all of his suggestions, to frequent

visits to the workshop and the studio, and one or two lengthy arguments where differences of opinion arose. Such occasions were rare. I learned something about film technique. And, just as, in learning a foreign language, we learn more about the resources and limitations of our own, so I think that I learned something more about the theatre, in discovering the different resources and limitations of the screen.

The first and most obvious difference, I found, was that the cinema (even where fantasy is introduced) is much more realistic than the stage. Especially in an historical picture, the setting, the costume, and the way of life represented have to be accurate. Even a minor anachronism is intolerable. On the stage much can be overlooked or forgiven; and indeed, an excessive care for accuracy of historical detail can become burdensome and distracting. In watching a stage performance, the member of the audience is in direct contact with the actor, is always conscious that he is looking at a stage and listening to an actor playing a part. In looking at a film, we are much more passive; as audience, we contribute less. We are seized with the illusion that we are observing the actual event, or at least a series of photographs of the actual event; and nothing must be allowed to break this illusion. Hence the precise attention to detail given by Mr. Hoellering, an attention which at first seemed to me excessive. In the theatre, the first problem to present itself is likely to be that of casting. For the Film of *Murder in the Cathedral*, Mr. Hoellering's first care was that the materials for the costumes should be woven in exactly the same way, from exactly the same materials, as they would have been in the twelfth century. I came to appreciate the importance of texture of material, and the kinds of folds into which the material falls, when fashioned into garments and worn by the actors, after I had seen the first photographing.

The difference between stage and screen in respect of realism is so great, I think, as to be a difference of kind rather than degree. It does not indicate any superiority of either medium over the other: it is merely a difference. It has further consequences. The film, standing in a different relation to reality from that of the stage, demands rather different treatment of *plot*. An intricate plot, intelligible on the stage, might be completely mystifying on the screen. The audience has no time to think back, to establish relations between early hints and subsequent discoveries. The picture passes before the eyes too quickly; and there are no intervals in which to take stock of what has happened, and make conjectures of what is going to happen. The observer is, as I have said, in a more passive state. The film seems to me to

be nearer to narrative and to depend much more upon the episodic. And, as the observer is in a more passive state of mind than if he were watching a stage play, so he has to have more explained to him. When Mr. Hoellering pointed out to me that the situation at the beginning of the play of *Murder in the Cathedral* needed some preliminary matter to make it intelligible, I at first supposed that what he had in mind was that a film was aimed at a much larger, and therefore less well informed audience, ignorant of English history, than that which goes to see a stage play. I very soon became aware that it was not a difference between one type of audience and another, but between two different dramatic forms. The additional scenes, to explain the background of events, are essential for *any* audience, including even those persons already familiar with the play. On the other hand, I hope that no amateur stage producer will ever be so ill-advised as to add these scenes to his production. They are right for the film; they would ruin the shape of the play. In the play, there is not room, beside Thomas Becket, for another dominating character such as Henry II; but in the film, he is not only admissible, but necessary.

I then discovered another interesting and important difference. The speeches of my Four Knights, which in the play are addressed directly to the audience, had to be completely revised. (Mr. Hoellering himself is responsible for the ingenious rearrangement and abbreviation; and I am responsible only for the words of the new ending of the scene.) This also is a consequence of the *realism* of film: the *Stilbruch* – as such an abrupt change is aptly called in German – would be intolerable. (It took me some time, and much persuasion, to understand the difference, and accept it.) For one thing, the camera *must never stand still*. An audience can give their attention to four men actually speaking to them; but to look at the picture of the same four men for that length of time would be an intolerable strain. Furthermore, having once got away from the scene of the murder, it would be impossible to get back to it. Therefore the speeches have to be adapted so as to be spoken to the crowd assembled at the cathedral; and when the third knight turns at last to address the audience, he must make his point very quickly and clearly, so that his hearers may return at once to the illusion of being eye-witnesses of an event which took place nearly eight hundred years ago.

In looking at a film we are always under *direction of the eye*. It is part of the problem of the producer, to decide to what point on the screen, at every moment, the eyes of the audience are to be directed. You are, in fact,

looking at the picture, though you do not realise it, through the eyes of the producer. What you see is what he makes the camera see. The fact that the audience's vision is directed by the producer of the film has special consequences for a verse play. It is important, first, that what you see should never distract your attention from what you hear. I believe this presented Mr. Hoellering with some of his most difficult problems. No one perhaps but I, who followed the creation of the film from beginning to end, can appreciate these difficulties, and Mr. Hoellering's success in solving them. Several visual effects, magnificent in themselves, were sacrificed because he was convinced that the audience in watching them would cease to attend to the words. Second, the fact that the illustration of the words by the scene is, so much more positively than on the stage, an interpretation of the meaning of the words, points to the conclusion that only a producer who understands poetry, and has taken a good deal of trouble to grasp the value of every line, is competent to deal with such a play at all. If the production of this film of *Murder in the Cathedral* leads – as I hope it may – to further experiment in the cinema with verse by living poets (and with plays written by poets *for* the cinema, not merely adaptations from the stage) the results can only be successful where there has been close co-operation and understanding between author and producer.

The play was originally written to be performed under the special conditions of the Chapter House at Canterbury, accepting the limitations and exploiting the special advantages of such a setting. Allowing for the great differences of aim and technique between stage and screen, I think that in some respects – notably in the treatment of the choral passages – this film version makes the meaning clearer, and in that way is nearer to what the play would have been, had it been written for the London theatre and by a dramatist of greater experience. I leave Mr. Hoellering to draw attention to some of the changes and developments from the producer's point of view.[3]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE and George Hoellering began preparing the text for the film edition in the spring of 1951; TSE likely started drafting his "Preface" in Switzerland in late Aug, when, having previously seen the film, he went to Vevey instead of attending its showing at the Venice Film Festival. On 20 Nov 1951, he wrote to Rupert Doone that he had "to revise a preface I have written, and to write a piece about *Murder in the Cathedral* which George Hoellering must have immediately for his New York publicity." The edition was published on 18 Apr 1952, with a description on the dust jacket: "This volume contains the complete scenario, including, with a few minor cuts

and alterations, the original text of the play, together with the new scenes written specially for the film by Mr Eliot, and not elsewhere published. It is also abundantly illustrated, with photographs of sets, details of costume, and architectural decoration." The TS of the preface is in King's (D3).

2. The film *Murder in the Cathedral*, produced and directed by George Hoellering, was first presented at the Venice Film Festival on 2 Sept 1951 and released in the United Kingdom in Mar 1952.

3. TSE's preface is followed by the "Preface by George Hoellering" (11-14).

Unpublished letter to the Editor of *The New Leader*

The *New Leader* (New York), a biweekly magazine of political opinion and literary/cultural criticism founded in 1924, was edited by Russian-born Samuel M. (Sol) Levitas (1894-1960), a Menshevik refugee from the Bolshevik revolution, from 1937 until his death. Its international contributors included Daniel Bell, Sidney Hook, Reinhold Niebuhr, George Orwell, Albert Camus, Hannah Arendt, and Bertrand Russell. On 19 Mar, Sol Levitas wrote gratefully to TSE that the editorial staff were "delighted by the contents of your note and I assure you that it gave us added inspiration to continue the struggle for elementary decency and dignity in this world of ours. We are indeed very proud of your opinions of The New Leader and we would appreciate it no end if you would permit us . . . to make your letter known to the public. . . . It goes without saying that we shall be proud to publish anything you may care to submit to us and I can only assure you that it will be read by a very attentive and appreciative audience." The letter did not appear in a subsequent issue; however, an edited eight-line statement from the second paragraph was printed in an undated advertising leaflet.

11 March 1952

Dear Sir,

I have been intending for some time past, to write this letter to convey my thanks to whoever it is that is responsible for *The New Leader* coming to me week by week. As exchange regulations in this country make subscription to periodicals abroad so difficult, this kindness is very much appreciated.

I should like to add that *The New Leader* is one of the few weeklies which I do look at, and indeed read most of, with regularity. In your case I have three reasons: that I find statements of fact not otherwise available to me; that I find the point of view generally sympathetic; and then when I disagree (as I inevitably do)[1] with the point of view of the periodical itself, or of a contributor, I find that point of view to be one worth disagreeing with: that is to say, the article helps me to understand better some position different from my own.

I was particularly pleased by your reply to my old friend Bertrand Russell in your issue of March 3d.[2]

Yours very truly,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In his reply to Levitas on 9 Apr, TSE stated that he had "no objection to your publishing my letter . . . amongst your correspondence, if you will agree to two conditions. In the second paragraph, there is a parenthesis reading 'as I inevitably do.' Will you please alter that to 'as I inevitably do from time to time.' As the sentence stands, it rather looks as if I disagreed automatically with everything, which renders nonsense of the sentence."

2. "My final condition," TSE continued, "is that the final sentence referring to Bertrand Russell should be deleted. There is no point in referring to this item, particularly after such a lapse of time, and I do not wish to give the impression that this article made more impression on me than a number of others." "Mr. Russell's Statement" and the editorial reply were advertised in bold type on the cover page of the *New Leader* of 3 Mar 1952: "Bertrand Russell and the Editors: Is America in the Grip of Hysteria?" On 30 Oct 1951, after returning to England from a visit to America, Russell had published in the *Manchester Guardian* what the *New Leader* editors described as "a vigorous indictment of what seemed to him to be an appalling growth of intellectual conformity and 'hysteria' in America" (2). After asking Russell to address this and other assertions about America and the West, the editors printed "Mr. Russell's Statement," in which he declared his belief that "the invasion of liberty in America is increasing and is already far more serious than is realized by those who live in New York. You suggest that attacks on liberty are confined to 'irresponsibles.' . . . You would, I am sure, admit that persecution of opinion in Russia is largely responsible, but persecution . . . of unorthodox opinion in the West is a more potent factor than most people in the West realize" (3). In their point-by-point reply, the editors declared: "In a free culture, no one has a monopoly of irresponsibility. But the redeeming feature of a free culture is the fact that irresponsibility in any quarter can be exposed, condemned and checked by an aroused public opinion. . . . Despite America's imperfections, we believe it is false to assert that it is imitating Soviet imperialism and Soviet despotism. . . . Anti-Americanism in England and Europe, and the xenophobic isolationism such sentiment provokes in America, serve not the cause of freedom and peace but the cause of the Kremlin" (4).

Notes for speech at the University of Rennes

TSE was in Rennes on 21-22 Apr 1952 to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Rennes. On 20 Nov 1951, he wrote to Paul Flamand, publisher and editor at Éditions du Seuil, who wished to meet him when he came to France for the degree: "As for the University of Rennes, I can only say that so far I have heard of this honour from one or two outside sources like yourself. I therefore do not know whether the information is correct, and if so, at what date they wish me to present myself, and therefore, I do not know whether I shall be able to come when they want me." The formal invitation came in French from Professor J. B. Fort on 25 Nov, but without specific dates. On 29 Jan, TSE offered his only possible dates, 21-23 Apr, leading him to write in frustration to Geoffrey Faber on 5 Feb: "In the second half of April I may be forced to go for two days to Rennes – where the University has inconveniently offered me a degree – an unwelcome offer which is difficult to refuse without discourtesy." The dates were not confirmed by the University until 2 Mar, when he was informed that he would be the house guest of the mayor of Rennes, Yves Milon (1897-1987), a professor of geology and former dean of the Faculty of Sciences (1940-49).

On 21 Apr, the university organized an evening of music and drama at the Grand théâtre in honor of the recipients of the honorary doctorate. This included a rendition of the overture from Purcell's *King Arthur*, played by the University Orchestra, and a performance in French of *Murder in the Cathedral* by the Jeunes Comédiens, abridged with TSE's advice and approval. The degree ceremony took place on 22 Apr at 2:30 p.m. at the Hôtel de Ville and was attended by academics as well as local politicians and dignitaries. TSE was introduced by Professor J. B. Fort and gave a short speech of thanks after a reading of "Journey of the Magi" and "Choruses from '*The Rock*'" by René Collin, professor at the Conservatoire de Rennes; TSE evidently drafted the notes for his speech in the morning, a summary of which was printed in the newspaper *Ouest-France* on 23 Apr. The ceremony was followed by a reception at the mayor's office hosted by Yves Milon. TSE wrote to him on 27 Apr: "I hope that I may one day return to Rennes, as you so graciously put it, as 'one of us,' and that the acquaintance so happily begun, may be renewed on your next visit – when I hope Madame Milon will accompany you – to London." As this is a rare sample of TSE's handwritten French, the text has not been corrected and his emendations have been reproduced.

Si j'ose prendre la parole . . . ~~procuration~~ délégué pour les trois nouv.[eaux] docteurs, K. Loomis et moi même.[1] Mais aussi vif espoir que vous n'attendrez pas de moi un beau discours. Je suis écrivain, et quoiqu'on puisse croire, les écrivains sont souvent mal doué pour l'art oratoire.

Comme mon premier Ch.[evalier] hier soir, homme d'action et pas homme de palabres, quoique mon action ne s'exerce que sur les clefs d'une machine à écrire.[2]

Déjà appris, de la bouche de mon metteur en scène, lors de ma première, que le seul mot qui devrait être prononcé par l'auteur quand il se présente devant l'auditoire, c'est le mot merci. Donc, je ne dirai que merci – mais ~~en plusieurs phrases.~~ avec qqes. variantes.

Nous vous remercions d'abord, pour ~~la généreuse~~ l'hospitalité princière (ou dev.[rais] je dire ducale)[3] de Rennes, pour votre acceuil cordial et fraternel, et pour l'honneur insigne que vous nous avez accordés, M. le Recteur, en nous décernant le grade de Doct. hon. causa et nous faisant membres de l'Université de Rennes.

Vous avez dit hier soir, M. le Recteur, une phrase qui m'a beaucoup plu. Vous avez donné, à votre choix de nouveaux docteurs, une signification symbolique, en soulignant les relations entre 3 pays.[4] Cela m'a donné un plaisir spécial d'origine ~~auto~~biographique

Au dix-septième siècle, mes aieux ont quitté, un peu précipitemment, l'Ouest de l'Angleterre pour se refugier aux côtes de la Nouvelle Ang[le]-terre.[5] A ma première vue des côtes de la terre armoricaine, j'ai cru constater une ressemblance au paysage de mon enfance.[6] Côtes granitiques, exposées aux orages de l'Atlantique, pays de marins hardis, habiles et courageux. Et au dixseptième, une autre ressemblance : la Nouv. Angl. hébergeant aussi bon nombre de sorcieres – que mon aieul s'est mis immédiatement à exterminer.[7]

En ~~rentrant sur~~ repassant les étapes, quand je suis venu en Europe, tout jeune homme, j'ai eu la prudence – et la bonne fortune de passer qqe. temps en France pour m'y imprégner de sa culture avant de faire la connaissance de la petite île située au nord de la Manche. ~~Je suis dess~~ (Je suis arrivé à

Cherbourg – j'aurais dû peutêtre debarquer à Brest, mais le bateau n'y faisait pas escale).

J'ai donc des liens étroits avec les trois pays. Ainsi, en ne m'attribuant qu'une partie modeste, entre nous trois, du mérite personel, je tiens à m'emparer d'une bonne partie du mérite symbolique.

Et je ~~serais~~ suis particulièrement fier d'y participer, ~~en resserrant~~ pour resserrer un peu de plus ~~dans~~ de cette façon les liens entre la Bretagne – et la Bretagne.

TRANSLATION
If I dare take the floor, as a delegate of the three new doctors, K., Loomis and myself.[1] But also a keen hope that you will not expect a good speech from me. I am a writer, and whatever one may believe, writers are often not very gifted orators.

As my First Knight last night, man of action and not of words, though my action only takes place on the keys of a typewriter.[2]

Already learned from my director at the time of my premiere that the only word which should be pronounced by the author when he appears in front of the audience is the word thank you. So I will only say thank you – but ~~in several sentences~~ with some variants.

We thank you first of all for the ~~generous~~ princely hospitality (or should I say ducal)[3] of Rennes, for your cordial and fraternal welcome, and for the great homage you have bestowed upon us, Mr. Rector, by awarding us the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa and making us members of the University of Rennes.

Mr. Rector, yesterday evening you uttered a sentence which I liked very much. You gave a symbolic meaning to your choice of new doctors by emphasizing the relations between three countries.[4] That has given me a special pleasure of a biographical nature.

In the seventeenth century my ancestors left, rather hurriedly, the west of England to seek refuge on the New England coast.[5] When I first saw the

coast of the Armorican land, I thought I noticed a resemblance to the landscape of my childhood.[6] Granite coastlines, exposed to the tempests from the Atlantic, land of daring sailors, skilful and brave. And in the seventeenth, another similarity: New England providing shelter also to a great number of witches whom my ancestor started to exterminate immediately.[7]

Reviewing the various stages, when I came to Europe as a young man, I had the forethought and the good fortune of spending some time in France in order to immerse myself in her culture before becoming acquainted with the small island situated north of the Channel. (I arrived in Cherbourg – perhaps I should have got off at Brest, but the ship did not call there).

I therefore have close links with the three countries. So, in allowing myself but a modest portion of personal merit between the three of us, I insist on taking a big part of the symbolic merit.

And I am particularly proud to be a part of this, in order so to tighten a bit more the links between Brittany – and Britain.

NOTES

1. The other two recipients were William Bernard Robinson King (1889-1963), professor of geology at the University of Cambridge, and Roger Sherman Loomis (1887-1966), professor of English at Columbia University. The latter could not attend the ceremony and was represented by Stephen V. C. Morris, cultural attaché at the American Embassy in Paris.

2. TSE quotes the First Knight's speech after the murder of Thomas Becket in *Murder in the Cathedral*, an abridged version of which was performed in his presence the previous night: "I am a man of action and not of words. For that reason I shall do no more than introduce the other speakers, who, with their various abilities, and different points of view, will be able to lay before you the merits of this extremely complex problem" (*CPP* 276).

3. Rennes is referred to as a "ville ducale" (ducal city) because historically the city was one of the capitals of the Duchy of Brittany.

4. The previous night Gilbert Mayer, dean of the Faculty of Letters, paid homage to the three new doctors stating that the award of these honorary degrees will tighten the links between the recipients' countries, the United Kingdom and the United States, and France. In his opening speech at the ceremony on 22 Apr, Paul Henry, rector of the University of Rennes, also highlighted the long-standing cultural connections uniting Britain, the United States, and France and praised the fruitful exchange of ideas and research methods between the three nations.

5. TSE's ancestor Andrew Eliot (1627-1704) moved from East Coker, Somerset, to Beverly, Massachusetts around 1668.

6. Armorica is the Roman name for the northwestern part of Gaul, between the mouths of the rivers Seine and Loire, corresponding roughly to present-day Brittany.

7. A reference to executions for witchcraft in New England in the second half of the seventeenth century. Andrew Eliot served as a juror on the Salem witch trials.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The five-page pencil holograph text on blue scribbling paper is in the Hayward Bequest (H21), King's College. Three cuttings from the newspaper *Ouest-France* of 22-24 Apr 1952, reporting the event, are in M15.

Découverte de Paris[1]

Les Nouvelles littéraires, 1286 (24 Apr 1952) [1]

Je vins à Paris pour la première fois en 1910, après mes études à l'université de Harvard, aux États-Unis, à l'âge de 21 ans. J'en avais eu le désir depuis plusieurs années.[2]

Ma dette envers Paris est incalculable. Je dois beaucoup aux conférences et aux cours que j'ai suivis à la Sorbonne et au Collège de France ; mais ma dette est surtout envers la ville elle-même.[3] Cette dette est plus grande qu'aucune de celles que j'ai envers les autres villes du monde. Mon année à Paris, à cet âge, a été, à bien des égards, la plus importante de ma vie.

Le stimulus de Paris était d'ordre intellectuel, artistique et profondément émotionnel.[4] Ce n'était pas simplement telle ou telle influence en particulier, mais tout un genre de vie, le plus riche, le plus développé et civilisé qu'un jeune homme ait pu avoir le privilège d'expérimenter.

TRANSLATION[1]

I came to Paris for the first time in 1910 at the age of 21 after finishing my studies at Harvard University in the United States. I had had the desire to do so for several years.[2]

My debt to Paris is incalculable. I owe a great deal to the lectures and the courses which I attended at the Sorbonne and the Collège de France; but my debt is mainly toward the city itself.[3] This debt is greater than any other debt I owe to other cities in the world. My year in Paris, at that time, has been in many respects the most important one of my life.

The stimulus which Paris provided was of an intellectual, artistic, and profoundly emotional nature.[4] It was not simply this or that influence in particular, but a whole way of life, the richest, the most developed and civilized which a young man could have had the privilege of experiencing.

NOTES

1. *Découverte de Paris*: discovery of Paris. *Les Nouvelles littéraires* was a weekly paper on literature and the arts based in Paris, founded in 1922 by the writer and journalist Maurice Martin du Gard (1896-1970), who served as editor up to the war and as an editorial adviser and presence thereafter; the current editor was Georges Charensol. On 9 Mar, as he prepared for his forthcoming lecture in English, "Scylla and Charybdis" (7.677), at the Centre universitaire méditerranéen in

Nice on 25 Mar, TSE received and accepted an invitation from Jean Lépine to attend a breakfast meeting in his honor on 26 Mar, in the company of Martin du Gard and friends. Martin du Gard evidently appealed to TSE to write this piece for *Les Nouvelles littéraires* as part of a sequence of writers who briefly described their discovery of Paris. TSE's contribution appeared before that of the French painter André Dunoyer de Segonzac. Some of the points made here were expressed in more detail in "What France Means to You" (6.512) and would be reiterated and expanded in TSE's interview in the *Paris Review*, 21 (Spring/Summer 1959), [47]-70.

2. TSE graduated in June 1910 and spent the following academic year from Oct 1910 to July 1911 in Paris, where he resided in a *pension* at 151 bis rue St. Jacques.

3. In Jan and Feb 1911, TSE attended Henri Bergson's Friday lectures at the Collège de France.

4. In a conversation with Robert McAlmon on 2 May 1921, TSE reflected: "I had only the genuine stimulus of the place, and not the artificial stimulus of the people, as I knew no-one whatever, in the literary and artistic world, as a companion – knew them rather as spectacles, listened to, at rare occasions, but never spoken to." *Being Geniuses Together, 1920-30*, ed. Kay Boyle (New York: Doubleday, 1968), 8-9.

The Value and Use of Cathedrals in England To-day

Chichester: Moore & Tillyer, 1952. Pp. 15, [1].[1]

My subject this afternoon is one that was suggested to me: I admit that I was attracted by the opportunity of putting into order thoughts which I had never fully articulated: but I should not have ventured on my own initiative to do so on a public occasion and especially before an audience in a cathedral. And even with the encouragement to do so, I have felt more and more that I committed myself to an act of temerity. To come to a cathedral city, to stand before Dean and Chapter and before an audience of Friends of the Cathedral, and put forward my own notions of the value and use of cathedrals in England to-day, has come to strike me more and more as an impertinence. Yet I did not face this conclusion until it was too late to propose some other subject.

I should like at least to make clear at the start, that I propose to avoid all consideration of what is and is not practical. I do not pretend to any knowledge of cathedral administration and finance; I am not myself expert in any form of finance; and I am completely incompetent in what are called ways and means. I say this to anticipate objections which are likely to occur to your minds long before I have finished. Otherwise, you are likely to say, in so far as you approve my ideas at all: this is all very fine, but how are these things to be done without money, and where is the money to come from? But I hold that the proper order in which to consider these matters, is to draw as clear a picture as we can, of what we should like to have if we could get it; and only in the second place, to consider how nearly we can approach to this ideal with the means at our disposal. Obviously, our several aims must then be arranged in order of prior necessity and of importance, so that we may not neglect the fabric of any scheme in attending to the decorations. I shall not attempt to set forth, in these brief and random notes, any order of importance; any more than I am prepared to attempt to defend my suggestions against the charge that they are impracticable. I would only suggest, that if we keep before our eyes what is desirable, even when it appears impossible of realisation, we may find that it is not all so impossible as it seems; for things sometimes become more possible if we want them enough. And that, on the other hand, if we limit our desires to what can be

easily had, we are likely to sink further into mediocrity. But I would remind you again, that the question of where the money and the men are to be found is one which I leave to those who are qualified to struggle with it.

So much is merely preamble. At this point I must raise the question: what do we mean by the *use* of a cathedral? For the word *use* can be a very dangerous one to use. This, no doubt, will strike some people as hair-splitting, and others as merely a tedious way of coming to an already accepted conclusion. I am afraid I can't help that: it is the way in which my mind works, and I cannot escape from it. There are different criteria of usefulness in different contexts. We are certainly likely to have something different in mind, when we speak of the "usefulness" of a cathedral and when we speak of the "usefulness" of a parish church. Now I don't suppose that anyone present holds the view that cathedrals should be done away with on the ground that they are obsolete in the modern world, and that the money spent to keep them going were better devoted to other public purposes. There are, I am sure, people outside of the Church who would gladly see them preserved simply as ancient monuments of historical and artistic interest with turnstiles and admission charges; who would not approve of the actual destruction of the older cathedrals, though they would grudge the money spent on building new ones in new dioceses. The edifice has some use for nearly everybody, even if it is only the use of attracting tourist traffic. So we do not question the assertion that a particular cathedral has *some* use. But there is a legitimate sense in which we may ask about the usefulness of a particular parish church. I have always held that the amalgamation of country parishes is at best a deplorable necessity; and with regard to the City churches of London, that all of which even the shell remains should be preserved and used as churches. The closing of any church is a disaster.[2] But with shifts of population it is sometimes justified; and where there are two churches near each other, in a neighbourhood that needs only one, it is better that one Church should be properly kept up and staffed than that both should be half-empty and half-derelict. The question of whether a particular church is "useful" is the question whether the funds and the clergy would not be better employed, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, elsewhere. And even if there was no lack of either there might still be something unedifying in there being two churches in near proximity, both very poorly attended.

Clearly, we can never say that a cathedral could, in this way, become superfluous, except in the unlikely event of a whole diocese becoming completely

uninhabited. Nor is my contrast between the cathedral and the churches of a diocese – only between the cathedral and any one parish church. But while there is sometimes a good reason for closing a church, there is one reason which could never be a good one. To some people at least, brought up outside of the Church, it can seem less reasonable for a small cathedral city to have parish churches as well, than for it to have several small cinemas as well as a grand one. For at least the small cinema will be showing an older film, at a lower price of admission; whereas at a small church, they will only be getting the same ceremony which they could see in the cathedral where it will probably be more grandly done, and certainly at the same price. And I have known even church members, who worshipped regularly at their cathedral, but almost never went near their parish church. It is not my duty – indeed it would be an impertinence – to lecture people on the obligation to support in every way, and primarily by attendance, their parish church, or at least the nearest church that suits them. I only make this point to proceed to the differences in the meaning of "usefulness" as applied to cathedrals and churches. The purpose of both is the worship of God according to the rites of the Church. But a church needs a congregation, in a sense in which a cathedral does not.

The "use" of the cathedral is for the performance of the complete liturgy of the Church for the Christian Year. The number of lay people attending services seems to me of quite minor importance. I should feel no misgivings even were there no congregation at all, so long as I believed that the people who weren't there were all attending a service in a parish church instead. A cathedral is doing its proper work even when no one is present except celebrant, deacons and servers; and if it omitted a single service because no one attended it, then it would be failing in its proper work. This work is the continuity and completeness of the liturgy and the continuous prayer and worship by its clergy. A cathedral is a kind of monastic institution open to the public: and the attendance of the public is only important, if important at all, when there is some ceremony which concerns the whole diocese or the whole province or perhaps the whole nation.

On the other hand – I am proceeding to my next point – a cathedral in doing this would be relieving the burdens of many parish churches. I do not want to confuse my plea with matters on which there is difference of taste and opinion. I like a full liturgy myself, and what I call a full liturgy may be fuller than some people like, though I should not care to be called a "ritualist." But whatever our views, most of us can, I hope, agree that there are some

services which are better left by the churches to the cathedral. Under present conditions, certainly, it becomes more and more of a burden upon parish churches to illustrate the full beauty of the Christian Year. Conscientious clergy are heavily tried by their pastoral duties; and the church finances are usually strained. To perform all the proper services of Holy Week, for example, is a very heavy tax, physically and spiritually, upon a vicar who is fortunate if he has one curate to help him. The increasingly popular midnight corporate communion at Christmas – if it is to be observed at all – is more fittingly performed in a cathedral. In short, whereas a poor parish church must struggle to perform faithfully the minimum essential, a cathedral should be able to perform the maximum possible.

I proceed to a point which follows very naturally what I have just been saying. As it is the function of the cathedral to maintain the highest liturgical standards, it is also its function to maintain the highest standards of religious art and music. With respect to the former, most cathedrals, like many churches, are handicapped by the monumental piety of the nineteenth and even earlier centuries – a piety which was sometimes nicely divided between religious zeal and family pride; but it is in any case better to put up with what we have inherited, rather than turn a cathedral inside out to suit the taste of each period in turn. But while I am conservative in the matter of doing away with what is old, I deplore excessive conservatism where there is new work to be done; and I had rather take the risk of a great modern artist, when we have one, than employ a man who can be depended on to produce a close imitation of the devotional art of an earlier age. Of course, by far the greater work of our cathedrals must be work of restoration, i.e. the work and expense to maintain the cathedral and its identity. And by restoration, I mean the replacement of what was there before as exactly as possible. The opportunities and occasions and needs for new work – for work which is not merely to supply something lost or decayed but which is an addition – the opportunities for these are relatively few and far between. But for such new work the Church ought to be prepared to make use of the best modern artists; and that is good for the artists too.

I should explain at this point that by the Church making use of the best modern artists, I am not contemplating a central board or committee to sit in London and issue recommendations to dioceses as to what sort of work they may or may not do; or even to give them a list of artists whom they are at liberty to use. I am always apprehensive of the dangers of centralisation in the patronage of art, because what begins in the spirit of encouragement

may easily become repressive and controlling; indeed, from the point of view of an artist one thing we ought to maintain and increase is a decentralisation of patronage; and here I have particularly in mind the plea that every cathedral should retain its autonomy in these matters, as well as in others. It certainly seems to be better that sometimes work should fall below the best standards and taste than that it should all be controlled by a Central Committee – but that is an aside.

But I am not primarily concerned with the cathedral as a patron of art: its effect upon artists and upon the general standards of art is incidental. That should be a by-product. What is important is that the perfection of service is a religious obligation, and that the artistic decorum is a part of the worship. I do not want cathedrals to be turned into art museums, whether of mediaeval or of modern art. For painting, sculpture and music should all be considered as ancillary to worship: they should never distract from it. I know that the first effect of a piece of church furniture by a living artist may be, to many worshippers, distracting. It is a form of art to which they are not accustomed; it is in a style with which they have no religious associations. If it is second-rate it may always remain an intruder. But when it is really good, it seems to me that work by modern artists quickens devotional feeling. When people are used to ecclesiastical ornament only of a particular historical period – and I have known people habituated to Gothic, who found baroque architecture unfavourable to devotion – it may be that their religious life and their daily life are too far from each other. To feel in a devotional mood, they have to be surrounded by reminders of some particular past, and, as they think, more pious age. Surely it is the great task of the religious artist, musician, and even the creative writer, to realise religious feeling in the terms of his own time.

For this reason, the Church – and, for the reasons I have given, especially the cathedral – needs the living artist. I would not have you infer that I should give any preference to modern music in the services, but I think it ought to be represented. At least we ought to give it a trial from time to time; and even commission religious music from modern composers. But in matters of music I am still less qualified than in those of the visual arts. It is sufficient for my purpose to make the point that it is a function of the cathedral to have the best church music and the best performance of it; and that this is necessary as a part of its worship, whether anybody comes to hear it or not. But that, as far as people do come, the cathedral has the responsibility of satisfying the best taste, correcting the imperfect, and

educating that which is unformed and setting the standard in these matters for churches.

I now come to a few observations on the most delicate matter of all. I mean the value and use of the Dean and Chapter. This is really, I believe, a logical inference from what I have said about the functions of the cathedral, in remarking that, in distinction to a parish church, the important thing was that the service and prayer should go on all the time, whether any congregation attended or not. That is itself a commonplace, but quite contrary to most people's habits of thought. Similarly, I should say that the first obligation of Dean and Chapter was not in any direct relation to the faithful, still less the general public, but to the cathedral itself. This is also a commonplace but revolutionary idea. Nobody ought to expect of deans and canons that they should undertake anything that interfered with this. And it seems to me that whatever else they are deprived of, they ought to have leisure: which means not having to account for one's time in terms of public activity. In my schooldays, we were given to understand that, before the Reformation, England was groaning under the burden of supporting innumerable idle monks; and that Henry VIII sent them all packing, except a small number of the least incorrigible, whom he turned into deans and canons.[3] I suspect that some of the reputation of the lazy monks has attached itself to their successors: for there lingers a belief among the unenlightened, that canons have nothing to do. I am not proposing to spring to their defence at this opportunity, simply because, not knowing all the members of all the chapters in the country, I have not the statistics with which to support my defence. But I have known canons who struck me as having too much to do: partly perhaps for the very reason that they were assumed to have time for odd jobs, especially that of preaching a good deal about their diocese and elsewhere. Now, in the world in which we live the possession and enjoyment of leisure has become a very rare privilege, and is visited with strong moral condemnation. It is taken for granted that anyone with leisure is certain to abuse it; and that if anyone is found to have any, he must be loaded with work to fill up his spare time. I think that this is a very serious error. I think that civilisation depends upon the right people having the right leisure; and that the Church should set the example for the rest of the world in this respect as well as in others.[4] It is now fairly well recognised, I hope, that a Bishop has no leisure, because he is doing the work of a permanent head of a Department of State, or of several heads at once, without a fraction of the staff which such a civil servant would consider essential. Most people

know that a conscientious parish priest has no time to read or think, and hardly time for his private devotions. Where is the thinking of the Church to be done? There are our Professors of Divinity in the universities, and we have several of great intellectual distinction: but a professor in a university nowadays holds no sinecure, and is thinking under difficulties and primarily for the benefit of his students. Some of our best theological thinking is done in the religious communities, but these are also very busy places. Furthermore, a man may have a genuine vocation for the religious life and yet not be gifted with powers of original thought; and on the other hand, there are those with intellectual abilities who should be more in the world and not in communities. It is in the cathedrals that we ought to affirm the last stronghold of leisure, for the sake of scholarship and theology. The fruits of leisure seem to me so important, that it is worth while to accept the abuse of leisure by those who are negligent of their opportunity, in order to obtain the benefits of the work of those who employ it profitably.

May I, at the risk of appearing self-centred, support this opinion by enlarging the generalisation from my own experience? For I do not think that the position of the philosopher and theologian, and that of the writer of works of imagination, differ fundamentally in this respect of leisure. What I have found desirable to enable me to go on writing, is a life in which part of my time is spent in a definite paid job which I believe to be useful – in my case, concerning myself with the publication of other people's books – and only part in writing those books which I write simply because I want to write them. What people who only see one's published writings do not know, is, the difficulty of maintaining the conviction that something one is writing simply because one wants to write it, and not because anybody wants it – because until it is written they can't know whether they want it, as they don't know what it is going to be – that such work is worth while. While I am engaged on any piece of writing that I set about in this way, I am always haunted by the fear that it is not worth doing, that it is a waste of time, that I am attempting something foolhardy and beyond my capacities. Well, I can with equanimity risk wasting a part of my time, but not all of my time. Everything I have done which has permanent value – if I have written anything of permanent value – has been written on this gamble.[5] But to do that I need to feel that the rest of my time is spent in activities which other people recognise *a priori* as useful. The things I do because I want to do them are only worth doing if I succeed; but I couldn't do them at all if I did not

have other activities which are worth doing by a standard which I know I can satisfy.

On the basis of my own experience and observation of others, I hazard a rough division of people into three kinds, in respect of occupation and leisure. There are those whose occupation and means of livelihood so engross their attention that their "leisure" is required only for recreation. At the other extreme, there are those whose individual activity, that which they pursue for its own sake, is so engrossing that they too need no "leisure" except for recreation: these persons either have independent means to enable them to pursue their bent, or else their bent is such that in pursuing it they obtain also a livelihood. For these also leisure may mean merely recreation. The two extremes may thus have a great deal in common, and in some cases may even be indistinguishable. A successful novelist or playwright, who earns his living by doing the only work that he most wants to do, may easily find himself in a position in which he has, from financial pressure, to write a novel or a play when he doesn't want to, or when he has nothing to say; he may even find himself forced into writing what the public wants, instead of what his conscience tells him he ought to write. The third class of persons consists of those who wish to devote themselves to some kind of original work, of scholarship, of thought, of imagination, but who do not want to devote the whole of their time to it, for one of the reasons I have already hinted at. It may be wholly unremunerative work, or they may be apprehensive of the dangers to the quality of the work itself of depending upon it for a livelihood. Or, if they have independent means, they may have a kind of social conscience which compels them also to some activity the usefulness of which, to God and to their fellow men, may be modest but is assured. In this way, the work that they do in their "spare time" may often be meagre, but it represents the use of leisure in the full meaning. It has in it an element of disinterestedness which relates it to contemplation; and contemplation, we need to remind ourselves often, is the highest form of human activity.

I may have seemed to you to have strayed from the subject of cathedrals to talking about myself; and from talking about myself to a subject more general but equally irrelevant. But I launched upon this part of my discourse by way of expressing my sympathy with canons. At least, with some canons, for I don't wish to suggest that they should all be of one type. There must be different kinds of canon, and there must be different kinds of author; and I am quite aware that some writers much greater than myself have worked

in a very different way from mine. But I do think that the necessity of leisure, and a right understanding of the meaning of leisure, need to be constantly brought to our attention in the modern world. And in particular, I think that it is necessary to defend leisure in the Church, in an age in which everyone is expected to be perpetually busy in ways which can be understood and approved by the meanest intelligence; and that the increasing lack of leisure, in the sense in which I take it, for everyone from bishop to curate, is a matter of most serious concern. All I can do is to talk about it: but I apologise if my interest in the point has caused my discourse to be different from what my title may have led you to expect.

NOTES

1. Published in wrappers "May or June 1952" (Gallup 87); subtitled "*An Address Delivered to the Friends of Chichester Cathedral on June 16th, 1951.*" First published in *Friends of Chichester Cathedral Annual Report*, Chichester (1950/51), 17-27, with minor capitalization and punctuation differences. The TS of the address is in King's (P24).

On 15 Jan 1951, TSE was invited to give the annual "Festival of Friends" lecture by his longtime friend Arthur Duncan-Jones (1879-1955), dean of Chichester Cathedral, who commended the lecture in the *Annual Report*: "I felt we should get from him what is so difficult to get today, a really philosophic approach to what a Cathedral is for. The philosophic approach is not what most people like, and therefore it is very necessary" (29).

TSE was also in the company of the Lord Bishop of Chichester, George Bell, who gave the vote of thanks, focusing on TSE's remarks on leisure and his "very great service in calling attention to a need of great seriousness" (*Annual Report*, 28-29). Bishop Bell, formerly dean of Canterbury Cathedral, had commissioned TSE to write *Murder in the Cathedral* for performance at the Canterbury Festival in 1935. "You would have enjoyed the afternoon at Chichester," TSE wrote to Edith Perkins on 25 Aug 1951, "and I thought of you there: they have the same Dean and the same Bishop." He wrote to Arthur Duncan-Jones on 22 Aug 1952: "I am happy to know that the printing of my Cathedral address seems to have justified itself. I heard the other day from a young friend in New York who had somehow got hold of a copy of it there."

2. In his "London Letter" of June 1921, TSE deplored the Church of England's "design to sell for demolition nineteen religious edifices in the City of London," bemoaning their loss as "irreparable and unforgotten." He drew attention to the *Proposed Demolition of Nineteen City Churches*, a pamphlet to which he later referred in his notes to *The Waste Land*, and pointed out that "for their destruction the lack of congregation is the ecclesiastical excuse, and the need of money the ecclesiastical reason" (2.345).

3. The Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536-40) was Henry VIII's attempt to suppress the monastic system in England, Wales, and Ireland in order to appropriate its wealth and remove the papal influence in the country. He took over nearly 900 monasteries, abbeys, and friaries, and pensioned off more than 10,000 monks, canons, and nuns. TSE's poem "A Fable for Feasters" (1905) opens with the lines: "In England, long before that royal Mormon / King Henry VIII

found out that monks were quacks, / And took their lands and money from the poor men, / And brought their abbeys tumbling at their backs" (*CPP* 587 / *Poems1* 224).

4. TSE discussed leisure in his preface to Josef Pieper's *Leisure the Basis of Culture* (7.654), on which he was working at this time (he had sent Pieper a draft on 22 May 1951). Pieper states in his preface that "Culture depends for its very existence on leisure, and leisure, in its turn, is not possible unless it has a durable and consequently living link with the *cultus*, with divine worship" (19). He goes on to argue that "one of the foundations of Western culture is leisure" (25).

5. In *On Poetry* (1947), TSE had already expressed this anxiety: "I have always been haunted by one or the other of two doubts. The first is, that nothing I have written is really of permanent value: and that makes it hard to believe in what one wants to do next" (7.13). He wrote in the "Conclusion" to *UPUC*: "No honest poet can ever feel quite sure of the permanent value of what he has written: he may have wasted his time and messed up his life for nothing" (4.691-92).

Presidential address to the Alliance française [I]

Since 1949, TSE had served as vice president of the Fédération britannique des comités de l'Alliance française, a coalition of local chapters of the French organization established in 1883 to promote French culture and language abroad. Following the sudden resignation of the president, the Earl De La Warr, TSE was invited to assume the presidency by the French ambassador René Massigli on 18 Apr 1952. The next day, after recommending other qualified members, he hesitantly accepted on two conditions, that he would not be required to undertake any financial responsibilities and that his term of office would be limited to two years: "The ideal President would combine enthusiasm and conviction, with personal connections and prestige in City circles. There is no public capacity . . . for which I am less gifted than that of raising money for good causes." After returning from a trip to America on 1 June, he began to prepare for his speech and duties as the new president for the three-day annual meeting (7-9 June) in Edinburgh, relaying his stress to John Hayward on 4 June over having to go a day early for a pre-conference dinner for dignitaries: "The worst is that I have to take the 10:00 train to Edinburgh on Friday morning, to preside, in the absence of the Postmaster General, at the Annual Jumblebee of the Alliance Française, and make speeches. This is grievous" (King's). TSE's address on 7 June was printed with the proceedings for distribution to members of the Fédération (see textual note).

My Lord Provost,[1]
Ladies and Gentlemen,

When I was thinking over what I should say to you this morning, I recalled my own words at Brighton a year ago.[2*] Then my mind turned to the future, to what I might say if I had the honour of addressing this meeting a year hence.[3] It struck me that I had fundamentally only one thing to say, and that I had already said it. That is a discouraging thought, which must now and again have crossed the mind of many speakers. But I reflected after a time, that perhaps this was not wholly due to the feebleness of my intellect and my poverty of ideas, but that it was in the nature of the situation. If there was only one thing to say, then perhaps originality lay in saying the same thing in different ways, illustrating different aspects of the same idea, and suggesting new contexts in which it was applicable.

I should not wish the Fédération Britannique to alter its purposes in any way from those for which it was originally designed; nor would I wish to exhort the member circles towards any different aims from those they already pursue. I think, certainly, that we should continue to experiment and to

enlarge our activities, and constantly try to discover new ways of realising our present aims: with this thought in mind I call attention to such enterprises as the circulation of books and films and the development of reciprocal visits of various kinds between Britain and France. The success of such an institution as ours depends upon the maintenance of a happy balance between the responsibilities of the central organisation, those of the member circles, and those of the individual members. If there were no central organisation, the members would be isolated from France and from each other; if the central organisation assumed too much responsibility, or if the members accustomed themselves to a passive dependence upon the central body, we should fall into a lethal totalitarianism. I dislike to employ the facile and abused word "democracy," but it still has, in such a limited context as that of the structure of the Fédération Britannique, a significance which it tends to lose in larger, political areas. In the end, the life of the Fédération depends upon the initiative and enthusiasm of its member circles, and the life of these circles depends upon the initiative and enthusiasm of their individual members.

Without, then, suggesting that the Fédération should set itself such grandiose aims as those of some recent international organisations of "cultural" purpose,[4] I like nevertheless to present our activity in its wider context. If European civilisation is to maintain itself in a world in which, in material wealth and in population, it finds itself at a disadvantage, we must first of all maintain the cultural kinship between France and Britain. Both of these nations have in the past been accused of arrogance. In so far as we have been guilty of pride, we have sometimes been proud of the wrong things. I speak particularly of Britain when I suggest that we have erred, not by oppression and insolence, so much as by an arrogant belief in the universal validity of our own institutions, and through this belief, seeking with good will to impose these institutions on others. In so doing, we forget that good institutions represent the history of a particular people, they are the fruit of its experience; and that, when we offer others the social and political structure without the experience, we are merely exporting machinery which may be useless or harmful to those peoples whose experience has not prepared them for benefiting by such machinery. We err if we take pride in our institutions rather than in the culture out of which these institutions have arisen.[5] And we risk – both in Britain and in France – turning to the opposite extreme of self-depreciation. If our faith is in machinery, and we find that other nations fabricate machinery – in the sense of social machinery – which in

a material way seems more efficient than our own, we tend to lose faith in our institutions and in ourselves. It is not for France or for Britain, or for any combination of European nations in which these two are included, to dominate the world; nor have we any desire to do so. But both France and Britain need to recover belief in themselves – and in so far as they believe in themselves for the right reasons, they will believe in each other. That is to believe in ourselves not for transient accidents of worldly power, but as a community of the living and the dead and the unborn, an historical identity of culture. For the conservation of such belief in our own culture – without which all other belief of a people in itself is vain – the Fédération Britannique de l'Alliance Française has its modest, but important function.

NOTES

1. The architect James Miller (1905-77) was Lord Provost of Edinburgh (1951-54), elected by the City Council to serve as its chair and as a figurehead for the city, similar to a mayor. He hosted a dinner for members after the addresses by TSE and others.

2*. Editorial note: "Voir compte-rendu de l'Assemblée Générale du 2 juin 1951, pp. 12 à 14" (see 7.617).

3. TSE would deliver the Presidential address to the Alliance française in Bristol on 23 May 1953 (7.786).

4. TSE evidently refers to UNESCO, whose aims he criticized as vague and ambitious in his letter to the editor of the *Continental Daily Mail* of 12 Nov 1947 (7.44).

5. TSE made a similar point at the end of his review of Middleton Murry's *The Free Society* (1948): "Concepts like *freedom*, and *equality*, and whatever may be taken as antithetical to freedom and equality, such as *order*, *discipline*, *rank* or *hierarchy*, get their content within particular societies, each with its own history. A living form of government (which is itself an abstraction from the way of life of a particular people) may have the most unhappy effects when set up as a *mechanism* in another society: two hundred years of India ought to have brought that fact home to us" (7.181).

TEXTUAL NOTE

Printed with the proceedings distributed to members, *Assemblée générale tenue le samedi 7 juin 1952* ([13]-14). The three-page untitled typescript, with TSE's holograph emendations, is in the Hayward Bequest (P27), King's College.

Address at the opening of the Walter Hines Page Memorial Library

As the president of Books Across the Sea, which was absorbed into the English-Speaking Union in 1947, TSE was called upon to give the address for the reopening of the Page Memorial Library, first opened in Dartmouth House in 1927 in memory of the American ambassador Walter Hines Page (1885-1918) during World War I. On 5 July 1952, TSE wrote to Enid Faber that he had "just written out a speech for opening a library at the English Speaking Union next Thursday." After delivering the address to publishers, writers, and booklovers at the Library's new premises in Concord House, 11 Charles Street, on 10 July, he received a letter of 17 July from Barbara Bonner, who had invited him on behalf of the Library: "Herewith, the precious typescript, and many many thanks for allowing us to copy it. // We are indebted to you beyond measure for all you did for us on the 10th (and also long before), not only for your 'Opening Address' . . . your patience, endurance & unfailingly charming response to the onslaught of herds is a miracle one must see to believe" (King's). TSE, who was now president of the London Library and preparing his opening address for its members on 22 July, continued to support the Page Memorial Library with donations of money and time.

Before opening the Walter Hines Page Memorial Library I think I ought to say something about its history for the benefit of those who have never attended its opening before. This is also the first occasion on which I have had the honour of opening it; and I will explain in a minute or two why I am the opener to-day. In 1923 the English Speaking Union (hereinafter referred to as E.S.U.) instigated an appeal – which was signed by Bonar Law, Balfour, Asquith, Lloyd George and Lord Grey – for funds for a Memorial to the late Walter Page in recognition of his services to both nations and to the Allied Cause as American Ambassador during the war of 1914.[1] The Memorial included a plaque in Westminster Abbey, and one in Grosvenor Square, a Travelling Scholarship for British elementary and secondary teachers to visit the U.S.A., and an annual Memorial Lecture: and after provision had been made for all these, the residue was applied to the creation of the Walter Hines Page Memorial Library in Dartmouth House, which was opened (the House, including the Library) on New Year's Day 1927.[2] Now the original aim of the Library, in the words in which it was then defined, was

> to provide the best works that had been written on both sides of the Atlantic, especially those not easily obtainable in ordinary libraries

with special reference to "poetry, prose, history, biography, fiction, drama, travel in both countries, architecture, painting, sculpture, music and gardening."[3] You notice that a great deal was provided for, besides poetry and prose; and even allowing for the fact that no provision appears to have been made for the best works as yet unwritten, this was a large order for any librarian. The library was well stocked to start off with; but the E.S.U. had a good many other claims upon its funds, and it was impossible to add regularly the appropriate new books. So, with the passage of time, the library remained as a good collection of books, but with decreasing relevance to the purposes of the E.S.U. The present Page Library Committee, on June 1st 1949, formulated a new proposal, that

> The Page Memorial Library should be devoted to books chosen to promote better understanding between the British and American peoples. It should be for the use of members and potential members, for the use of and as an auxiliary to the Current Affairs Department, for the politically intelligent and the socially curious.

It was further suggested that

> a section should be devoted to books on British topography and background for the use of American visitors: the existing Books Across the Sea collection amply supplied the needs of prospective British visitors to the United States.[4]

Now, this is where I come in: not because I once called on Ambassador Page in his Embassy, on the strength of having been a school-mate of one of his sons, but because I was President of "Books Across the Sea" from 1943 until it ceased to exist as an independent entity.[5] I am not here to talk about "Books Across the Sea," hereinafter referred to as B.A.S.; although, as a mere figurehead who did none of the real work, I should like to testify to the devoted labours of those ladies – I mention particularly May Lamberton Becker and Charlotte Day in New York, and Beatrice Warde and Miss Barbara Bonner here[6] – who, in B.A.S., kept open, during the war, under great difficulties, the lines of communication for those in this country who wanted to know the best of what was being published in America about America, and for

those in America who wanted to know the best of what was being published in Britain about Britain. The only point I wish to stress is that I think it was the example of what Books Across the Sea had done during the War, and is still doing, both here and in New York, as a Department of the E.S.U., that inspired this wise suggestion of the Page Memorial Committee. By 1949, B.A.S. had sent 2500 new books across the sea in both directions: to-day, it has reached the figure of over 5000 books in both directions – books which at the time had not been published, and very many of which have never been published, in the other country. The prime consideration, in the choice of books, was the choice of books which would conduce to a better understanding between the two nations.

The emphasis of "Books Across the Sea" was of course on books newly published. The greater part of our collection of American books given to us by and through the American B.A.S., is now housed in the South Audley St. Library of the City of Westminster. But some of our books, especially works of reference, have been added as a supplement to the Walter Page Library. These books help the Library to carry out that part of its originally stated function, which consists in providing books not easily obtainable in ordinary libraries.

In 1949, the Page Library was moved to a room in Concord House which subsequently proved to be endangered by dry rot.[7] So most of the collection had to be stored, while a new chamber was made ready. Everybody is aware of the fact that building and decorating is a lengthy business; I do not suppose that our builders and decorators drank more cups of tea than other builders and decorators – perhaps, fired with zeal for Anglo-American relations, they voluntarily abstained from one extra cup on each occasion. But the alterations had to be made without interrupting the other functions of the E.S.U., so other needs had to take precedence.

However it came about, we have now arrived. But I ought to mention that the Librarian, Miss Barbara Bonner – whom I remember coping with day to day business in B.A.S. while fly-bombs were flying over our heads – has meanwhile been carrying on in a very small room crammed with current and necessary reference books. I hope that she will now be able to breathe.

There are two other points I must mention – and remember, the Library is not open until I say so – first: the original book cases, built specially for the original room in Dartmouth House, proved unsuitable for the new installation. The funds needed for the present bookcases came from a

legacy from the late Lady Mills Mackay, in memory of her husband Sir George Mills MacKay, one of the founders and the first Treasurer of the E.S.U., and [the] extraordinary helpfulness of Mr. Ernest Barlow, Exec[utor] of Lady Mills.[8] And in the reading room which is the anteroom to the Page Library you will see for the first time the collection of rare and important books on London presented to the E.S.U. by the friends of the late Helen Campbell Hughes, as a memorial to a woman whose services to the Book Trade and whose career as a bookseller were cut short by her death by enemy action in 1944.[9] And now, I declare the Walter Hines Page Library open.

NOTES

1. Andrew Bonar Law (1858-1923), Conservative politician and prime minister from 1922 to 1923; Arthur James Balfour (1848-1930), Conservative politician and prime minister from 1902 to 1905; Herbert Henry Asquith (1852-1928), Liberal prime minister from 1908 to 1916; David Lloyd George (1863-1945), Liberal prime minister between 1916 and 1922; and Sir Edward Grey, 1st Viscount Grey of Fallodon (1862-1933), Liberal politician who served as Foreign Secretary from 1905 to 1916, signed a letter to the editor of the *Times* on 25 Jan 1923 appealing for funds for a memorial to Walter H. Page "to perpetuate a name and services that can never be thought of, on either side of the Atlantic, without deep affection and gratitude" (11). American editor, publisher, and diplomat Walter Hines Page was the US ambassador to the United Kingdom from 1913 to 1918.

2. A memorial tablet for Page was unveiled by Sir Edward Grey in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey on 3 July 1923; a Blue Plaque was placed at 6 Grosvenor Square, where Page lived; in 1924, the English-Speaking Union founded the Page Travelling Scholarships for British Secondary and Elementary School Teachers, awarded to teachers wishing to study in the United States; the first Walter Page Memorial Lecture was delivered at Westminster Hall in London by Sir Auckland Geddes, former British Ambassador to the United States, on 11 Nov 1924. Dartmouth House, a large Georgian residence located at 37 Charles Street in central London, was purchased by the English-Speaking Union in 1926 and inaugurated as their London base by Prime Minister Sir Stanley Baldwin on 22 Feb 1927. A room was set apart for the Page Memorial Library.

3. Source untraced. The minutes and memoranda of the 1927 and 1949 Page Memorial Library committees have not been located in the files of the Library, now housed in the basement of the English-Speaking Union, Dartmouth House.

4. Source in the Page Library untraced

5. Like TSE, Frank Copeland Page (1887-1950), Walter's third son, attended Milton Academy and then Harvard, but failed to graduate and left the university in 1909. TSE visited the American Embassy several times after the United States entered World War I in Apr 1917. "At the Embassy, everyone is very busy, but no one knows anything about America's plans," TSE wrote to his father on 18 Apr 1917 (*L1* 196); Vivien Eliot reported to Mary Hutchinson on 18 Aug 1918: "He would have written, but is rushing about to the embassy etc." (*L1* 276). TSE's draft card is signed by the

Vice Consul and dated 19 Aug 1918; Ambassador Page left the Embassy for a sanatorium in Scotland on 2 Aug and died in his North Carolina home on 21 Dec.

6. TSE acknowledged their contribution also in his 1948 presidential address to Books Across the Sea (7.122).

7. In the 1940s and 1950s, the English-Speaking Union had expanded from No. 37 into other Charles Street House properties, including No. 36 and Concord No. 11.

8. As reported in the *Times* of 2 Nov 1951, Dame Vera Augusta Mills McKay (née De Sereiles, 1878-1951), widow of Sir George Mills McKay (1869-1937), bequeathed £500 "for the purpose of providing new bookcases with glass doors for the Page Memorial Library" (6).

9. Helen Campbell Hughes (1895-1944), a daughter of the late Bishop of Llandaff Joshua Pritchard Hughes, worked for fourteen years with Messrs. Bumpus, booksellers, of Oxford Street, when she was killed by enemy action on 30 June 1944, as reported in the *Times* of 7 July (2).

TEXTUAL NOTE

The four-page typescript, with TSE's holograph emendations, is in the Hayward Bequest (P26), King's College, and is accompanied by the letter of 17 July 1952, quoted in the headnote, from the librarian Barbara Bonner, thanking TSE for the address.

Tribute to Max Beerbohm

This is one of 39 contributions to the "Birthday Book," a volume of tributes presented to Max Beerbohm on his eightieth birthday on 24 Aug 1952. TSE wrote to Donald Gallup on 10 Sept 1952: "There are no copies of the book compiled in honour of Sir Max Beerbohm. Each contributor wrote his own tribute on a sheet of hand-made paper; these sheets were then bound and the unique volume was presented to the distinguished octogenarian." TSE's tribute is partially quoted by Katherine Lyon Mix in *Max and the Americans* (Brattleboro, VT: Stephen Greene Press, 1974), 170, and by J. G. Riewald in *Max Beerbohm's Mischievous Wit* (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 2000), 188.

T. S. Eliot

I am not among those who are entitled to refer to him as "Max." To me he is Sir Max Beerbohm, Hon. Fellow of Merton College, whom I once visited (though he will have forgotten it) at Rapallo, and whom I once met (though he will not remember it) at a dinner-table in London.[1] He is the defense and illustration of the benefits to a writer of the discipline of the classics; the illustrator, rather than the apologist, of urbanity and the qualities of English prose style now falling into neglect – armed as he is with the sword of wit and the buckler of humour. He once referred to himself as "a link with the past."[2] It would be a sanguine hope for English letters, if we could regard him also as a link with the future.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The English writer and caricaturist Sir Henry Maximilian "Max" Beerbohm (1872-1956) was best known for his novel *Zuleika Dobson* (1911). He was educated at Merton College, Oxford, but left without a degree in 1894. In 1910, he married the American actress Florence Kahn and moved to Rapallo, Italy, where they spent the rest of their lives. TSE must have met Beerbohm during his only visit to Rapallo, 19-23 Dec 1925.

2. "I am what the writers of obituary notices call 'an interesting link with the past,'" Beerbohm claimed in the radio broadcast "A Small Boy Seeing Giants" (26 July 1936), published in the *Listener* of 5 Aug 1936 (241), where TSE is likely to have read it. It was later collected in the volume *Mainly on the Air* (London and Toronto: William Heinemann, 1946), [25]-36; here 31.

TEXTUAL NOTE

The album containing all 39 tributes is in the Merton College Library, Oxford (Max Beerbohm Collection 1.13); a copy of TSE's separate contribution is in the Berg (m.b. Beerbohm).

Some Thoughts on Braille

Books: The Journal of the National Book League, 272 (Sept 1952) 75-76[1]

The name of Louis Braille has been conspicuous in the Press, and his native country has just paid him the highest posthumous honour within its power to give.[2] But funerary honours are quickly forgotten: tombs are soon unfrequented; and as for statues, the more publicly they are situated the more completely they become ignored – after a little while few pause to look at them, fewer still to decipher their inscriptions. Perhaps the most enduring honour to the memory of Louis Braille, is the half-conscious honour we pay him by applying his name to the script he invented – and, in this country, adapting the pronunciation of his name to our own language. We honour Braille whenever we speak of *braille*. His memory has in this way a security greater than that of the memories of many men more famous in their day. And his is a name which we are all under obligation to honour, in perpetuity, in the most practical way: by carrying on the work for the blind that he initiated.

There are several ways in which we may contribute to make the lives of the blind happier, fuller and more useful. But it is appropriate that we should turn our minds to-night especially to the problem of the provision of literature for the blind. We are the guests of the National Book League, formed to promote the reading of books; Lord Normanby is to address you on the subject on which no one else is so well qualified to speak – the National Library for the Blind;[3] and I presume that it is as a man of letters – for I have no other qualification – that I was invited to take the chair at this meeting. That is certainly the reason why I accepted: or rather, it is the reason for my interest in the subject.[4†] May I make some observations from the point of view of a writer – a writer who has also been connected for many years with the publishing of books, and who, incidentally, both in writing and in publishing, has had to read books written by other people? At times a grievous burden: but in this dual capacity, no demand gives me more pleasure than the request for permission to print one of my works in braille.[5] It is a request any author should regard as a signal compliment. From the point of view of the publisher, the arrangement has a simplicity, an absence of complications, which is all too rare in his business negotiations.

There can be no hesitation in accepting; a simple exchange of letters; and author and publisher have done their part. I regret, however, that I am ignorant of what follows. I do not know by what process the books are produced, I have never seen one of my own books in braille, and – what is more important – I do not know whether anybody reads them. I infer, from the fact that I have received this welcome request more than once, that the interest in a previous book has been enough to justify the production of another; but whether my works in braille are well-thumbed, or remain on the shelf, I have never discovered. Perhaps I shall now obtain this information.[6]

I am interested in braille, however, for a personal reason. I do not know whether the thought of possible blindness haunts other writers, but I know that it has always haunted me. And this, without any physical premonition: my sight I am thankful to say is as reliable as most people's. For a writer, blindness need not be, of course, the end of his activity, as it must be for a painter: but it involves readjustments so great as to frighten *me*. It happens that two great writers of my own generation, both friends of mine, came to suffer from this affliction and I know something of their difficulties.[7] It is easy to speak of the resource of dictation, for those who have never had to dictate more than their business correspondence. At one time I made the experiment, for a short while, of trying to dictate essays and lectures. I had the advantage of being able to read what I had dictated, to correct and alter – and a great deal of correction and alteration proved necessary. Even so, I found that dictation changed my style of writing, and that the mental effort involved, if I was to escape diffuseness and repetition, was immense. Nowadays, the dictaphone, when available, has facilitated the work of the blind author; but even with this aid the labour of correction and improvement of what one has dictated must be prodigious.

It is not, however, so much the difficulties of composition that appal me, as the impossibility of reading: for, as I have hinted, if a writer has not constant access to what other people have written, his own work may come to suffer from undernourishment. It is often said, of poetry, that its primary appeal should be to the ear; that it is meant to be heard rather than seen. This is true, but it is only a half-truth. Only at early stages of history has poetry been purely auditory, memorised by the bard and passed on by word of mouth; and for centuries we have been accustomed to the printed book.

Poetry is meant to be heard *and* read: and this is true even of dramatic verse: think how incomplete would be our appreciation of Shakespeare if, however many times we had seen and heard performances, we had never had

access to the printed text! It is excellent that poetry should be read to us by skilled readers: it is a common experience, to find that a poem which seemed dull or incomprehensible when we have read it to ourselves became living and meaningful when we heard it well read. But then, I think, after this experience, we want to open the book and read the poem to ourselves. We want the interpreter – but the interpreter is also, inevitably, another personality interposed between ourselves and the author. I like to hear poetry well read. But I depend still more on reading it to myself. And if, on the one hand, a good reader can help us to understand a poem which had meant nothing when we read it to ourselves, I find also that when my first acquaintance with a poem is by hearing it read, I do not altogether take it in. What the good reader can do, is to provoke in me the *desire* to read it to myself. So I find that I need both to hear and to read. If I were completely dependent upon readers I should never feel that I had attained complete intimacy with the poem itself, and with its author.

That is why, if I were suddenly blinded, or if I found the world slowly dimming before my eyes, I should be thankful for the invention of braille. Whether at my age I could master it, I do not know; but the hope of mastering it would sustain me. For without being able to read, independent of others to read to me, I do not believe that I could write – or, in so far as I could write, I should be chiefly dependent upon my past reading during my years of vision.[8] That is why I want the blind to be able to read for themselves, as well as to be read to.

NOTES

1. TSE delivered this address on 25 June as chairman of a meeting held by the National Book League, with the cooperation of the National Institute for the Blind and the National Library for the Blind, at 7 Albemarle Street, London, to mark the centenary of Louis Braille's death and support the Braille Centenary Fund. TSE's lecture was first printed in the course of an article entitled "National Book League Celebrates Braille Centenary" in *The New Beacon: A Magazine Devoted to the Interests of the Blind*, 36 (15 Aug 1952), 176-77, and reprinted with minor revisions in *Books: The Journal of the National Book League* the following month. Two TSS of the address are in King's (P31).

The critic Herbert Howarth gave the following account of the evening in the same issue of *Books*: "Mr. T. S. Eliot was in the Chair in the Lamont Room at 7 Albemarle Street when a blind reader was reading from *The Rock*. He closely watched the swift signal-seeking fingers of the reader passing across the embossed Braille script, ever, it appeared, a little in advance of the speech, as a pianist, inversely, reads ahead of his touch. The reader – who was Mr. R. W. Bridger – reached the line in which, after God has been praised for much in the universe and in man's experience, praise is given for the skills 'forming at the ends of our fingers.' In the sudden change in Mr. Eliot's

expression I thought I saw with what wonder and sense of revelation he perceived an unexpected addition to his original meaning" (84). The *New Beacon* similarly reported that TSE's and the Marquess of Normanby's addresses "were followed by readings from Braille by Mr. Robert Bridger and Miss Mary Jameson, M.B.E. . . . He had the unenviable task of reading in the presence of their author extracts from Mr. Eliot's difficult poem *The Rock*, but he acquitted himself so well as also did Miss Jameson, when she read passages from *Murder in the Cathedral*, that the author admitted with no hesitation that he had seldom heard his own verse read more competently and that the readings revealed good qualities in it which made him doubt whether he had ever composed it" (176).

2. Louis Braille (1809-52), the French inventor accidentally blinded at the age of three, devised a system that enables blind people to read and write. Braille is read by passing the fingers over characters consisting of a combination of one to six embossed points. To mark the centenary of his death, Braille's remains were exhumed from his grave in Coupvray on 20 June 1952 and transferred to the Panthéon in Paris with France's other national heroes.

3. The National Book League was founded in 1925. TSE later delivered the 11th Annual Lecture of the National Book League, "The Three Voices of Poetry," in Nov 1953 (7.817). The British politician Oswald Phipps, 4th Marquess of Normanby (1912-94), was chairman of the National Library for the Blind, established in 1880 to supply embossed-type books. He pointed out in his address that the National Institute for the Blind, the National Library for the Blind, and the Royal School for the Blind in Scotland "were using this Braille Centenary Year to make a combined appeal for £120,000." *The New Beacon*, 36 (15 Aug 1952), 178.

4†. In the *New Beacon*, this sentence read: "That is certainly the reason why I accepted. I had outer forms of compulsion laid upon me, but I had also an inner compulsion to attend, for are not books more necessary to the blind than others?"

Vernon Barlow wrote to TSE on 7 Mar 1952 inviting him to the meeting, pointing out that "physical blindness is now no longer a handicap for reading, and it is our greatest endeavour to make it possible for the blind to get to know literature in every form, not only indeed as a study but even as a profession. To this end, we are hoping leaders of culture in this country will be able to give us their aid from time to time. // To the blind, of course, books can be everything and Braille has opened up this world for them." TSE replied on 10 Mar that he "should certainly consider it obligatory" to accept the invitation.

5. On 16 Apr 1931, TSE had given permission for *The Waste Land* to be transcribed by hand into Braille (*L5* 549). On 15 Jan 1934, he authorized the use of "La Figlia che Piange," "Sweeney among the Nightingales," and "A Song for Simeon" in the Braille production of *The Book of Living Verse* (1932), ed. Louis Untermeyer (*L7* http://tseliot.com/letters/lv7-035). He wrote to Madeline Clutterbuck on 22 Mar 1937 that he had "no objection to your transcribing *Murder in the Cathedral* into Braille for your friend. When I have received applications from the National Institute for publication of any of my works I have always allowed them to do so free of charge."

6. Three of TSE's works had been published in Braille by the Royal National Institute for the Blind: *Murder in the Cathedral* in 1936; *A Choice of Kipling's Verse* in 1942; and *Collected Poems, 1909-1935* in 1949.

7. TSE refers to James Joyce and Wyndham Lewis. As he himself reported in "The Approach to James Joyce" (1943), "Throughout his life he had suffered from a very serious ailment of the eyes: an affliction which gave him periods of the most intense pain, and at times rendered him

almost totally blind" (6.427). Lewis's eyesight had failed by 1951, and TSE paid "a special tribute to the work he did after he became completely blind," namely, the novels *Self-Condemned* and *Monstre Gai*, in his obituary note "Homage to Wyndham Lewis 1884-1957" (8.174). TSE was instrumental in Lewis receiving a Civil List Pension after he became blind.

8. When discussing the impact of Joyce's blindness on his work, TSE remarked that "He was an observant man; the partial blindness robbed him of his visual experience, and helps to account for the fact that in all his chief works he draws upon memories of his youth in Ireland" (6.427).

An Address to Members of the London Library[1]

London: Printed for the London Library by the Queen Anne Press, 1952. Pp. [8].

On my first appearance before you as President, it has seemed to me proper, and a sign of due respect to my audience, that I should offer an address more formally prepared than might be desirable on later occasions; and that the content of this address should be a kind of testament of faith in the London Library.[2]

First of all, I should like to say something of my personal debt to this Library. It is a great many years ago that – under the sponsorship of the late Sir Sydney Waterlow, one of his many kindnesses to me – I was admitted to membership.[3] I was then employed in a bank in the City, and had little time to spend in libraries. I was also writing for various literary periodicals, notably *The Athenaeum* and *The Times Literary Supplement*. As a conscientious reviewer, I needed to consult standard works and works of scholarship. There was the British Museum: but I had only my Saturday afternoons free – three Saturday afternoons out of four, as the fourth, at one period of my modest career as a financier, was spent in Cornhill dealing with an obscure operation called "the clearing."[4] I am not ungrateful to the British Museum: but when I installed myself there after lunch on a Saturday, it often happened that I had hardly opened the essential volume for which I had been waiting, when there sounded the familiar warning which corresponds to the phrase "Hurry up, please, it's time."[5] At this juncture, it was the London Library that made my literary journalism possible. I could go there at my leisure, after lunch on Saturday, rummage the stacks, and emerge with nine or ten volumes to take home with me. Without the London Library, many of my early essays could never have been written.

This personal record, however, is parenthetical, and has no direct bearing upon my main theme, which is: What is the value of such an institution as the London Library to-day, and why is its preservation worth fighting for? The question has a double pertinence. First, in relation to the financial perplexities of the Library, of which we are all aware; and second, in relation to current tendencies of opinion. Sooner or later a cry may be raised, to put us on the horns of a dilemma. It will say, either that the London Library is superfluous, and should therefore be abolished; or else that it is

too valuable to be reserved, and should therefore be taken over by some public authority and thrown open to everybody. So we have to answer two questions: can such a library, limited to members and supported by subscriptions, survive? And, *ought* it to survive? Our answer to the first question will depend partly on our answer to the second. Now, I should not be here, unless I believed that the London Library, in its present form, ought to be preserved.[6†] And when I say this, I am not thinking primarily of its august tradition of service, of all that it has done for letters and scholarship in the last hundred years.[7] The maintenance of an institution cannot be defended on the ground of its usefulness in the past: only on the ground of its value for the present and the future. I am not even thinking primarily of its services to its members – though I *am* thinking of the services so many of its members have performed which they could not have performed so well without the London Library.[8†] I am thinking of the Library as itself performing a service to English civilisation. And as for the future, I shall endeavour to give grounds for my belief, that the London Library, instead of diminishing in value, is becoming more necessary than ever before.

Consider, then, whether there is any other type of library which could replace ours. Certainly, not the great National Libraries. These foundations have their own problems: have you ever reflected on their nightmare future, the world over? Publishers have sometimes complained of the compulsion they are under, to send a copy of every book they publish to the so-called copyright libraries.[9] But what of the other side of the picture? These libraries have the awful burden of having to accept every book that is sent them – file it, eventually catalogue it, and preserve it until the time of holocaust. Their problem, like the traffic problem, is insoluble: nothing but the exhaustion of fuel supplies can solve the traffic problem, and nothing but the exhaustion of paper supplies can solve the National Library problem. And indeed, in some great modern libraries there is a traffic problem too: I have visited a great new library building in America, in which I was shown, with pride, the system of directions which had been elaborated to prevent the possibility of readers getting lost in the interminable maze of stacks.[10] True, all libraries suffer to some degree from the same complaint: it is in the nature of things that until the day of doom every library must grow and grow. All libraries bear this burden of Atlas (and indeed the burden of Atlas was less, for it remained constant, of the same size and weight):[11] but some libraries are at least free to dispose quietly, after a decent space of time, of those books which nobody wants at all, and of those which no one wants

except the few who want them so much that they are prepared to go to a national or a university library to consult them.

I say nothing of the circulating libraries which perform a different function, and serve on the whole a different public, from ours: though they have nowadays a subscription quandary not dissimilar to ours. It is rather to the municipal and borough libraries that our critics will point, those who will say that *if* the London Library is not superfluous, then, on moral grounds, it ought to be thrown open to everyone, because to exclude people from something they cannot pay for is contrary to social justice. At this point, I do not propose to enlarge my subject to include any general affirmations about liberty, equality and privilege: a region of discourse in which passionate prejudice obfuscates counsel and eclipses reason. I am only concerning myself with the special case of libraries. I recognise, of course, the important function which only the local public library can perform. But I hold that the London Library is of unique, of essential service just because it *is* restricted to members. If this is "privilege," then it is privilege which I defend with complete conviction: only adding that amongst the "privileged," for the London Library, should be included as many as possible of those individuals whom the Committee recognises as suitable and desirable members, but who cannot afford the subscription. The members of the Library should in general be such people as are prepared to make some sacrifice, to economise in any reasonable way, in order to pay their subscription. But beyond that point there are many readers who deserve the "privilege," who are amongst those best qualified to profit by it, and who nowadays cannot afford the subscription at all. Hence the imperative need for the Carlyle Trust, and for benefactions to enable it to carry out its purpose.[12]

Here is the great difference between the London Library and the public library: the London Library has always had a certain homogeneity of membership. In what this homogeneity consists, would be hard to define: but with great diversity of interests, our membership has always represented the high level of culture and of what I may call serious readership. And without such a membership, the assembling of this collection of books would have been impossible. The Committee, when they buy a book, know, in a sense, for whom they are buying it. I do not believe that there is another library of this size which contains so many of the books which I *might* want, and so few of the books which I cannot imagine anyone wanting; and in saying this I believe that I am speaking simply as a representative member. A public

library, however judicious it may be in the selection of books, and however desirous to improve the taste of its readers, has to consider the interests of that great, vague, unknown entity called "the public." It may be easy to build up a public library for specialized or technical books: it would be impossible to build up a public library, of the size of the London Library, equally suitable for the type of reader represented by our members.

The optimum number of members of the London Library seems to me contingent upon this consideration, as well as upon our limitations of size, and the limitations of physical endurance of the staff. It should, from this point of view, be the largest number of members of the right kind, of men and women of general culture as well as special interests. I do not think we need fear that there will ever be too many such potential members at our doors, suing for entrance. I only say that the unique character of the London Library, which, with the aid of the Carlyle Trust, we hope to preserve, has been due, not only to the wisdom, scholarship, taste and administrative ability of successive Librarians and Committees, but to the quality of our membership: and this is an advantage which no *public* library can enjoy.

I have suggested that, whatever social changes come about, the disappearance of the London Library would be a disaster to civilisation. But I also hinted that some of the transformations which we have witnessed in our lifetime render this library more essential than ever. I was thinking of the disappearance of what used to be called "the gentleman's library": the decline of those already formed, and the impossibility to-day of forming a new one. There are three kinds of private collection of books. There is the collection of the collector: the man who collects valuable and rare editions, usually of some one author or of some one type or period, and who, when he really knows what he is about, is a bibliographer. Such collections have great value: but, so far as they are not dispersed on the death of the collector, but preserved intact in some public institution where they will be accessible to those worthy to examine them, we need not repine at their passage from private hands. There is what I called "the gentleman's library," a library of the best editions of such books as a person of general education and culture would wish to have at hand. And finally, there is the private library which is merely a haphazard accumulation. The last is the most frequently found to-day, and it is the kind that I own myself. Mine includes, for instance, books which I reviewed years ago and have never consulted since (some of them still containing the label for returning them to *The Times* after the review

was written);[13] it includes books which I have bought to read and have never opened; it includes books presented by their authors – which I keep, some in the hope of reading them, some out of personal regard for the author, and some out of politeness or prudence. It includes some books which ought to have found their way to Foyle's outdoor bin years ago.[14] I have an accumulation of books so various, so recalcitrant of order, that when I want to consult some book I know I possess, I cannot find it, and have to borrow it from the London Library.

Very few people, nowadays, do possess a collection of books which deserves to be called "a library." Very few of us have the space. We all suffer from claustrophobia, from living in boxes too tight for us. Just as, sitting in the vast smoking room of some large club, I can imagine myself the proprietor of a palace, so when I come here, I have a better library than the library I should like to own myself. Here are so many of the books I should like to own. Complete editions, for example, of the works of minor Elizabethan dramatists. Even if I could get them (and some are very difficult to obtain) I have no room for them. Nobody can give house room to the complete works of voluminous authors; yet no one, I hold, is well educated unless he knows the *complete* works of several great authors and of a few favourite minor ones.[15†]

The great private libraries have had their day, and are gone. Even the more modest private library is a rarity. And under these conditions the London Library takes its place: this is the private library of each one of its members.[16] This is a very important function indeed; and I am convinced that if this library disappeared, it would be a disaster to the world of letters, and would leave a vacancy that no other form of library could fill.

NOTES

1. "On the occasion of his assuming the office of President of the Library. Delivered at the Annual General Meeting of Members in the Reading Room, 22 July 1952." Library Chairman Harold Nicolson presided. TSE was unanimously elected president of the London Library on 10 Dec 1951, effective 1 Jan 1952, with Harold Nicolson made chairman of the committee, as reported in the *Times* of 11 Dec (4). TSE wrote to Edith Perkins on 10 Feb 1952 that he had been made president "with the assurance that I shall not have to concern myself with matters of business which the Chairman is more responsible for. But it will mean a speech at the annual meeting in July." One of his first duties as president was to write to the Home Secretary on 12 Feb on behalf of the library committee expressing "profound grief at the death of their Patron, his late Majesty King George VI" and highlighting the library's indebtedness to the Royal Family. George VI was succeeded by his wife the Queen Mother as patron of the library; TSE served as president until his death in 1965.

The speech was reported in the *Times* of 23 July (4). It was published in wrappers in Sept 1952 without revision from the article as it appeared in *Book Collector*, 1 (Autumn 1952) 139-44. The TSS of two versions of the address are in King's (P28).

2. Founded in 1841, the London Library is located at 14 St. James's Square. Former presidents include Thomas Carlyle, Lord Tennyson, and Sir Leslie Stephen. TSE provided a brief history of the library in a joint letter sent with Harold Nicolson to the *Times* of 4 Mar 1952 (7): "The London Library, mainly owing to the initiative and persistence of Carlyle, was founded more than a hundred years ago, to satisfy the needs of 'those who, the most extensively and with the greatest minuteness of research, cultivate literature and science.' No other country in the world possesses a comparable institution, supplying its members with the standard works on almost every subject in almost every language" (7.872).

3. TSE met the diplomat Sir Sydney Waterlow (1878-1944) in 1915, when Waterlow, as a member of the editorial committee of the *International Journal of Ethics*, invited him to review for it. TSE joined the London Library in Oct 1918, and on 6 Jan 1920, he told his mother: "I am fond of Sydney: he has been very kind to me in the past" (*L1* 427). Waterlow had also initially supported TSE's naturalization application, though he had to withdraw as a sponsor after he was appointed as a British minister in Siam in 1926.

4. TSE was employed in the Colonial and Foreign Department at Lloyds Bank at 17 Cornhill from Mar 1917 until 1925 when he joined Faber. In banking, "clearing" refers to the settlement of accounts and the interbank exchange of drafts and checks.

5. From *The Waste Land*, II: the publican's drink-up cry at closing time (*CPP* 65-66 / *Poems1* 60-61).

6†. In the copy of the address that TSE presented to Anne Ridler, he corrected this sentence to: "in its present form, ought to survive." TSE inscribed the book "to Anne Ridler with the President's Compliments" (Blackwells Rare Books, cat. B161, July 2009).

7. Former distinguished members who benefited from the services offered by the library include Thomas Carlyle, William Makepeace Thackeray, Lord Tennyson, Rudyard Kipling, Rebecca West, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Charles Darwin, Arthur Conan Doyle, Henry James, George Bernard Shaw, Virginia Woolf, Vita Sackville-West, E. M. Forster, and Agatha Christie.

8†. TSE changed this to "performed as well without the London Library" in the copy inscribed to Ridler.

9. According to the Copyright Act 1911, "The publisher of every book published in the United Kingdom shall, within one month after the publication, deliver, at his own expense, a copy of the book to the British Library Board." Five other libraries (the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the University Library, Cambridge; the National Library of Scotland; the Library of Trinity College, Dublin; and the National Library of Wales) are entitled to request a free copy within twelve months of publication (Chapter 46, ¶ 15).

10. The Firestone Library at Princeton, which opened in 1948 while TSE was at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study from 4 Oct to 25 Nov.

11. Atlas was a Titan, one of the older family of Greek gods, condemned by Zeus to support the pillars of the universe on his shoulders.

12. TSE reported in his joint letter to the *Times* of 4 Mar 1952 that in order to keep up with rising costs of books and overheads, it was decided at a general meeting of the library that the

subscription, which had remained unchanged for the last twenty-five years, had to be raised. He explained: "We are concerned with the effect that this increased subscription may have upon those whom the library is above all anxious to serve – namely, the 'needy scholars.' A trust fund has, therefore, been started, under the name of 'The Carlyle Trust,' with the dual object of enabling students of small means, whatever their age, to have access to the library without payment of the full subscription, and of increasing the educational value of the library by the purchase of important works of scholarship. The trust is officially recognized as a charity" (7.872).

13. i.e., *TLS*

14. W & G Foyle Ltd. (usually called Foyles), founded in 1903, is a bookshop at 113-119 Charing Cross Road, London.

15†. This sentence in the first draft (King's P28) reads: "Yet I maintain that no one can be said to be generally educated, unless he knows the complete works of several great authors, and indeed of several minor ones. I flinch, ~~certainly~~, before the complete works of Voltaire or Goethe: but there are other great writers whose work can be encompassed" (9). The reference to Goethe and Voltaire was omitted in the second and subsequent versions of the address.

16. In his 1958 presidential address, TSE clarified the meaning and implication of this phrase: "I have read that a phrase which I coined, in my inaugural address in 1953 as President of this Library, has been quoted in forensic as an admission that the Library is not [a] public institution, not a 'charity,' but, I suppose, something in the nature of a club. What I said was: 'the London Library is the private library of each of its members.' If this phrase is considered in the context of my whole speech it will appear incapable of the interpretation given it. Every serious writer or reader needs privacy. He needs to be able to take books home and retain them for some time. The London Library is the private library of each of its members in the sense that it contains so many of the books which he needs but cannot afford to own and has not the space to keep. My phrase does no more than indicate the fitness of the collection to the membership, and the fitness of members to the collection" (8.277).

United Nations Buildings

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (4 Nov 1952) 7

Sir, – In your issue of November 1 your Architectural Correspondent refers to "faults of planning and lighting that have made the United Nations secretariat the target for so much criticism." The building is also open to the criticism that its shape is quite incongruous with those of the skyscrapers which have made the sky-line of New York famous.[1] It would be still more incongruous with the architecture of Paris; and if a similar honey-comb-on-end were to be erected on the edge of the Bois de Boulogne it should be as unwelcome to lovers of Paris, the world over, as the model is stated to have been to the sites committee of the prefecture of the Seine.[2]

Your obedient servant,

T. S. ELIOT

24, Russell Square, W.C.1.

NOTES

1. The report outlines the response to the preliminary designs for the UNESCO headquarters building to be erected in Paris, which "bears some resemblance to the United Nations headquarters in New York." The proposed building is described as having "the same contrast between the relatively low main mass and the strikingly vertical block containing the administrative offices, and this block has the same basic form, that of a narrow glass-fronted slab" (5). A. Neville Holt wrote to TSE on 14 Nov 1952 expressing approval of this letter: "It really is high time that the informed public started to kick against these monstrosities, now being erected everywhere." He also enclosed a copy of the letter he himself sent to the *Times* on this issue, which was however not published. TSE replied on 18 Nov that "it is encouraging to have your support, especially as the letter in rejoinder which *The Times* has so far published took the opposite view from mine." M. Hartland Thomas had written on 8 Nov criticizing TSE's implication that "the sky-scrapers of New York are now to be regarded as ancient monuments and their amenities protected by the too customary method of designing new buildings in stylistic imitation" (7).

2. The plan was rejected by the sites committee, and it was not well received by the town planning committee of the city of Paris, and even by the government. TSE echoes the views expressed by the Architectural Correspondent: "Quite apart from its intrinsic qualities, the proposed design is regarded as utterly unsuited to the site. Its great height would make it dwarf not only the existing buildings in its immediate vicinity, and so throw them out of scale; it could, from some angles, ruin the perspectives leading up to the Place de l'Étoile and the Arc de Triomphe" (5). The Y-shaped building was eventually built between 1953 and 1958 in Place de Fontenoy.

Canonization

To the Editor of *The Church Times*

The Church Times, 135 (7 Nov 1952) 803

Sir, – May I be permitted, as another layman, to express my agreement with Mr. C. S. Lewis's letter in your issue of October 24?[1]

It would seem to me sensible, before any further steps were taken – even before we engaged in prayer for enlightenment about the problem as a whole – if we made a test case of the status of Charles King and Martyr.[2]

T. S. ELIOT

24, Russell-Square, London, W.C.1.

NOTES

1. C. S. Lewis's letter, also published under the title "Canonization" in the issue of 24 Oct, criticized "the proposal to set up a 'system' of Anglican canonization" (763).

The first draft of the letter included the following paragraph here, which TSE crossed out: "Even the organization of Rome might quail before the difficulties involved in making up four centuries of arrears in the recognition of holiness and venerability. The unfortunate commission (we might call it the Selection Committee) charged with the detection of sanctity during the last ten or more generations, would find itself in embarrassment resulting from different movements within the Anglican Church, to say nothing of the problem of reconciling prejudices of political origin. And, if we arrived finally at a selection satisfactory to all, our advocates of British Reunion would find that one more problem had been added to complicate their present perplexities. The Free Churches might either be alarmed by our claims, or else urge their claim to bring their own worthies into the united body; so that to the actual problem of Intercommunion would be added a problem which might be denominated that of the Intercommunion of the Saints."

2. King Charles I (1600-49) is the only person to have been canonized by the Anglican Church. In the calendar of the Church of England, he is identified as "Charles, King and Martyr, 1649." His Feast Day is 30 Jan, the anniversary of his execution in 1649.

Tribute to Luigi Pirandello

Sipario, 7 (Dec 1952) 66

Pirandello is a dramatist to whom all serious dramatists, of my generation and the next, must recognise a debt of gratitude.[1] He has taught us something about what our problems are, and indicated directions in which their solution may be sought. He has shown us by his example that the escape from the confinement of naturalistic realism in the theatre, need not be sought in the artificially "poetic" or in the fantasies of a play of bloodless ideas and arid epigrams. He has had the courage and the imagination which have made it possible to penetrate "realism" and arrive at reality.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The Italian writer and publisher Valentino Bompiani wrote to TSE on 13 Oct 1952 inviting him to contribute a piece on the work and significance in today's Europe of Luigi Pirandello, to be published in a special number of the theater magazine *Sipario* devoted entirely to the Italian dramatist. TSE sent this tribute on 27 Oct saying: "I am glad to hear from you that an Homage to Luigi Pirandello is in preparation. I much wish that I could offer you a critical appreciation of the work of this great dramatist. But the only play of his that I have in fact seen performed is *Henry IV*; there are some plays which I have not yet even read; and to offer anything worthy of Pirandello, I should be obliged to devote a great deal of time to the study of his work." TSE had printed Pirandello's short story "The Shrine" in the *Criterion* of Jan 1923, one of the first English periodicals to publish his work. However, he was not initially enthusiastic about Pirandello's plays, as he asserted in his 1926 review of Eugene O'Neill's *All God's Chillun Got Wings* (1924) that "This enthusiasm, for either Mr. O'Neill or Signor Pirandello, I cannot share. I know that Pirandello is a master of the technique of the theatre, as I have seen one or two of his plays" (2.783).

When Frederick May, Italianist at Leeds University and an expert on Pirandello, wrote to TSE on 11 Sept 1961 referring to this contribution to *Sipario* and asking whether he would "agree that Pirandello's influence on the modern dramatist is akin to that of Dante on the modern poet," TSE's secretary replied: "He has asked me to say that he is very sorry that he does not feel that he knows enough about Pirandello's influence, especially since he has only seen one of his plays, to be able to give you any statement on this matter."

The Publishing of Poetry

The Bookseller, 2450 (6 Dec 1952) 1568-70[1]

I felt flattered by the invitation to address the Society of Young Publishers: it struck me that at last I had achieved the honour of being recognised as an Old Publisher. I am accustomed to being regarded, by other publishers, as a member of that tiresome, inferior but necessary class of beings known as Authors. I expect to be treated as a Publisher only by my own Authors – who do not necessarily always regard me as a *good* Publisher. Yet, if I am not qualified to address you on this subject – the *publishing* of poetry – I am not qualified to talk to people on any subject whatever. For I have had twenty-five years' experience of this branch of publishing. What I propose to offer you this evening is a selection of the small fruit of my experience, picked in a somewhat haphazard manner.

The first point I have to make will appear so simple as to be almost a glimpse of the obvious. It is this: that the most important difference between poetry and any other department of publishing is, that whereas with most categories of books you are aiming to make as much money as possible, with poetry you are aiming to lose as little as possible. And I maintain that it takes as much canniness to achieve this result with your poetry as it does to make comfortable profits from some other kinds. I admit that publishers do bring out now and then books, in other categories, on which they expect to lose money: I am only suggesting that poetry is the only whole department in which you expect to lose money.

TWO NECESSARY CONDITIONS

If the only thing one had in view was to lose the minimum, the answer would be plain: don't publish poetry at all. This is the way in which many publishers solve the problem. There must be some other reason impelling some publishers to undertake this unprofitable activity. The word which springs immediately to every lip is "prestige." But this word prestige needs looking at. We use it rather freely: sometimes it is a consolation prize which publishers award themselves for a book which hasn't done as well as they had hoped. It is curious that we should attach so much value to prestige: we are not quite sure what it is, we are never quite sure that we have got it, and

we are never sure how much it is worth when we have it. I shall say something more on this subject of prestige presently. But one thing I am sure of is, that if you publish poetry solely in order to get prestige, you are unlikely to get it, and you will probably waste money instead of merely losing it. You have to have some better reason. I think that for publishing poetry two conditions are necessary.

The first is, that the director or directors of policy in a firm publishing general literature must be convinced that English poetry has been one of the glories, perhaps the chief glory, of our literature in the past; and that, in consequence, it is a responsibility towards society that such a firm should do something for English poetry, by publishing the best poetry, written in our time, that it can get hold of. And the second essential is, that there should be somebody in the firm who can give a good deal of time to this department; someone, preferably, with a flair for recognising at an early stage poets who will be publicly recognised in ten or fifteen years' time.

"PRESTIGE" ONLY A BY-PRODUCT

If these two conditions are fulfilled, you may be able to build up a list which in due course will contribute to the firm's prestige. But the prestige must come as a by-product: what you are aiming at is to publish some of the best poetry being written in your time. You won't get prestige – not the right kind – merely by taking over poets who have already established their reputation: the firm itself must have had something to do with building up that reputation. You must be known to have backed the right authors long before they became famous.

This raises another interesting point about the kind of prestige with which I am concerned. After you have acquired it, you can't sit back and relax. You have got to go on earning more, if you are to keep what you have earned. If you close your list, and simply go on publishing the work of the same successful poets, people will begin to say "What a good firm that used to be: now all the life seems to have gone out of it." So prestige has two parts: (1) having picked the right authors in the past; (2) going on guessing about the younger generation.

With this combination it is obvious that your prestige for what you have done up to date will help to establish your newer authors. That is, your imprint on a book of verse will be an initial advantage: it will, at least, ensure some attention from editors and reviewers when the new books reach them. I don't know how much difference the imprint makes to the buying public,

which depends for poetry on reviews and on recommendations in conversation. And, incidentally, I don't think that advertising makes much difference: all you can do is to announce that a new book of verse has been published. The more famous authors will sell just as well, and the younger ones just as meagrely, on the minimum of advertising matter.

THREE CLASSES OF POETS

My next point is that I think we can divide the poets on a good, well-balanced poetry list into three classes, roughly speaking. My three classes do not bear any necessary relation to the relative importance of the poets – this is a classification only into sales. It is of course to be expected that, other things being equal, the better-selling poets will be the older and the poor sellers the younger ones.

First, there are the poets who actually make some money, for themselves and for their publisher. Not much money, compared with some lines of merchandise, but still a cosy little sum. Any poet whose new book can be expected to sell 3,000 within a year of publication belongs in this class: which has a very, very small number of members indeed! This class can be counted on to provide good property for a back list. In the course of time, the Collected Poetical Works and a few volumes of Selected Poems of various sizes and prices should go on selling throughout the term of copyright, sufficiently to make it worth while to keep them in print, for profit as well as prestige.

The second class consists of poets who have proved their worth, who consistently get fully reviewed and noticed, who are always mentioned in lists of the best poets of their generation. Incidentally, it is when a poet is not merely reviewed but constantly referred to, that I begin to have confidence in his success. When the reviewer of the new poets X, Y and Z gives his readers to understand that they ought to be familiar with the work of A, B and C – then I feel happy about A, B and C. This second class ought not to show more than a small deficit on a book at the end of twelve months. You are not making money, but your losses are negligible. Some of these will get into the first class in time, others will stay where they are.

Third, there are the poets on whom you are losing money. They are the young ones who may – or may not – get into the second class in a few years' time. You are still testing them out, for a promising start may be deceptive: you don't know about their staying power. Yet they are a necessary part of your list: otherwise you will be thought to have lagged behind. And I believe

that if the Poetry Editor is himself convinced of the exceptional merit of a poet he should stick to him through thick and thin however disappointing the response of reviewers and readers.

This leads me immediately to my next point. I look at a good many poetry scripts every week. Of the great majority, I may say that there is no part of my work which costs me less time and trouble. That is one thing about verse: you can judge from a very small quantity whether the author has any possibilities or not; you can often say, "The man who can write as bad a line as that simply hasn't got it in him." The rarest experience is to come across a new poet who strikes you as so good that you don't need anybody's judgment but your own. There remain a small number of scripts by new authors about which you cannot make up your mind at once. I usually keep such scripts for a long time, to take them up again at intervals, to read them in a different mood, at a different time of day. When one is tired, and has been looking at a number of bad scripts, it is very easy to deceive oneself into thinking that a collection of poems is better than it is, merely because it is better than the others.

Also, there is a time span beyond which one has less confidence in one's own judgment. With volumes by new poets more than twenty years younger than myself – and the majority of new poets now are much younger than that! – I do not altogether trust my own reactions.[2] It becomes necessary to have a few younger friends, themselves in touch with what is happening among the young, whose opinion one can take. I don't say that I always accept their valuations, but they are always helpful. And if a new poet seems to me meritorious, but I don't feel that at the moment our own list ought to have an addition, I consider that I ought to commend him to some other firm.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE "LITTLE" PUBLISHER

It is exceptional when a new poet of merit turns up, without my ever having heard or seen his name before. He has usually appeared from time to time in one or more of the little reviews and poetry journals. I consider these periodicals – most of which do not survive for long – of great value in general: to the young poets, because it is helpful to see one's work in print, and because they get known in this way to each other; to the editorial departments of publishers, as they enable us to keep an eye on the development of the younger writers without having to commit ourselves. But equally important are what I call the "little publishers."

What I mean by a "little publisher" is something like this. Somebody, very likely a lady with some means and great enthusiasm, starts a small business for publishing poetry, and is prepared to lose money by it. It is firms like this which can publish small booklets by young poets.[3] For a large firm, the overheads on such little books are so excessive in proportion to the possible benefits to either publisher or author that their publication is out of the question; and a small specialised firm can often handle them more successfully. A "little publisher" can also afford to publish such little poetry books in a series. For the large firm, a series of new poets is undesirable. A series is likely to conform to a sort of Gresham's Law: it is judged and remembered, not by the few good poets who are launched by it, but by the much higher proportion of mediocre verse in that series.[4] Furthermore, the "little publisher" incurs no great responsibility: he can drop a poet without that poet suffering any loss of reputation; and he knows that his more successful poets will eventually be taken on by some larger firm of general publishers anyway. But the general business firm cannot afford to be constantly publishing single volumes by poets whose later work they must decline. It doesn't look well, and is not fair to the poets themselves, or to the other poets established on one's list.

PUBLISHER-POET RELATIONSHIP

Finally, when we get to the stage of taking on a new poet, there is often much work to be done in preparing his first volume. With such a book, I may have to read every poem several times and make tactful suggestions of detail. Then I may have to make a selection from among the poems offered, for a young poet does not always know which are his good poems and which are not. The order in which the poems are to be placed in the volume is important, and the editorial expert ought to know better than the author what the best order will be: the order in which they should meet the reviewer's eye. Then a good title has to be found for the book – often the title of one of the poems: but which one? And finally, the blurb. Everyone engaged in publishing knows what a difficult art blurb-writing is; every publisher who is also an author considers this form of composition more arduous than any other that he practises. But nobody knows the utmost difficulty until he has to write blurbs for poetry: especially when several are to appear in the same catalogue. If you praise highly, the reviewer may devote a paragraph to ridiculing the publisher's pretensions; if you try understatement, the reviewer may remark that even the publisher doesn't seem to think much of this book. I have had both experiences.

As for the publisher's relation with the poets, he has two chief troubles. The first is to dissuade a poet from wanting to publish too soon: before he has *enough* good poems for a volume without putting in inferior poems. The other is to prevent a poet from wanting to publish too often. The saturation point of the market for poetry, for poetry even by a very well known poet, is low. It does even a good poet harm to bring out his volumes in rapid succession. It is sometimes the poet's literary agent who has failed to grasp this elementary market principle.[5]

MONOPOLY A BAD THING

One final question – which I put last because I don't know the answer: indeed, I am not sure that there is one. How large should your poetry list be, in relation to the total output of books of your firm? I believe there must be an optimum somewhere, because I believe that an excessively swollen poetry list is a disadvantage to the poets on it, as well as to the publisher's balance sheet. But on the one hand the poets already on your list go on writing and turning in new books; and these poets must certainly have priority – except when they produce something lamentably below their level, which isn't often. And on the other hand, as I have said before, you have to add new poets from time to time, in order to keep up to date. The only answer I can find – not, perhaps, a final answer – is that I wish that there were more publishers who considered it worth their while to have a poetry list. A monopoly would be a very bad thing, not only for poets themselves and for society itself, but for the poetry publisher who was the monopolist. I am sure that the other publishers who do publish verse will agree with me in wishing that we might see the publication of verse more widely diffused.

NOTES

1. An editorial note states: "The following article reproduces the substance of a talk which Mr. Eliot gave to the Society of Young Publishers last month" (1568). The subtitles were inserted by the editor of the *Bookseller*. TSE wrote to Janet Adam Smith on 29 Nov: "I have spent the afternoon, since tea time, in revising the shorthand report of my address on 'The Publishing of Poetry' delivered last week to the Society of Young Publishers (mostly Sales and Production young people of both sexes!) for publication in *The Bookseller*." The notes from which TSE talked, Penelope Colt's shorthand report at the meeting, and the revision from the shorthand version are in King's (P29).

Established in 1949, the Society of Young Publishers' purpose is to enable its members to establish connections, find out more about the profession, and provide a gateway into publishing through voluntary, mutual help.

2. At the beginning of "Yeats" (1940), TSE argued that "the generations of poetry in our age seem to cover a span of about twenty years. I do not mean that the best work of any poet is limited to twenty years: I mean that it is about that length of time before a new school or style of poetry appears" (6.78).

3. TSE refers specifically to Harriet Shaw Weaver and the Egoist Press, which she founded at her own expense in 1916 to print *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in book form since Joyce could find no other publisher for it. This "little publisher" went on to print works by Richard Aldington, Jean Cocteau, H. D., Marianne Moore, Ezra Pound, and TSE's *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917). The Egoist Press also had a Poets' Translation Series. In Penelope Colt's shorthand report at the meeting (King's P29), the reference to Weaver is made explicitly: "my first book of verse was published by a lady from whom I have drawn my previous description of the ideal 'little publisher' – I mean Miss Harriet Weaver with the Egoist" (9).

4. Gresham's law (OED): "the principle, involved in Sir Thomas Gresham's letter to Q. Elizabeth in 1558, that 'bad money drives out good,' i.e. that when debased money (sc. coins reduced in weight or fineness, or both) is current in the same country with coins of full legal weight and fineness, the latter will tend to be exported, leaving the inferior money as the only circulating medium."

5. TSE began to address this point in his "Address to the Publishers' Association" (1949), where he observed that the publisher, "in the interest of his poets, as well as in his own interest, . . . must keep his poetry list within limits" (7.457). He wrote to W. H. Auden on 17 Aug 1933: "As you know, I consider it always the best policy for a poet's output to be sparse and small; in the long run it pays best from every point of view" (*L6* 627).

Message on Charles Maurras

Henri Boegner (1884-1960), a teacher of philosophy and classics and an associate of Maurras in the Action Française, wrote to TSE on 25 Dec 1952 inviting him to Paris on 9 Jan 1953 to take part in a meeting to commemorate Charles Maurras, who died on 16 Nov 1952. The event was due to be attended also by Henri Massis and Jean Paulhan, among others. TSE replied on 2 Jan sending his apologies and enclosing this one-page tribute to be translated into French and read out in his absence.

There have been famous writers, men whose thought and whose gift of language have affected the attitude towards life of innumerable readers during their lifetime, and whose influence has declined from the moment of their death. I can think of such in my own language: writers of such eminence that their every pronouncement, in their lifetime, seemed to their admirers – and perhaps to themselves – assured of enduring fame; yet whose reputation, after the journalistic *feux d'artifice*[1] of the obituary moment, has begun to sink into oblivion. Maurras is not one of these.

On the contrary. His reputation and influence, during his lifetime, were paradoxal and ambiguous. During that stormy life his name represented a party, a movement. There were many who adhered, not to Maurras, but to the movement, the party, he chose to represent.[2] In the eyes of those who feel only political emotions, and judge only in political terms, he represented no more. The experience of more discerning admirers was paradoxal. He was not a believer, yet there are those whom he strengthened in their allegiance to the Church; and, through their allegiance to the Church, in their submission to God. I speak as an Englishman: I found Maurras unjust to Britain, failing in understanding of the meaning of the British Empire – yet his writings helped me to appreciate better the merits of the British political tradition.[3] Besides the minority who subscribe to the integral political programme of Maurrasism, there was a smaller minority who are grateful for having learned something from Maurras.[4]

Death, I believe, can only reveal his permanent importance. When opinion is purified from the passion of the time, he will prove, I believe – tel qu'en lui-même enfin l'éternité le change[5] – to belong not to a party but to his whole people, as a great prose writer in the language which has the greatest prose tradition of any modern language. And such works as *Réflexions*

sur l'Intelligence and *Anthinéa* will become part of the heritage of all European peoples.[6]

NOTES

1. *feux d'artifice*: fireworks

2. Charles Maurras was a leader of the right-wing political movement Action Française. TSE reprised the points made in this message in his letter to the editor of *Time and Tide* of 17 Jan 1953 (7.775).

3. TSE regretted Maurras's attitude toward Britain, writing in the *Christian News-Letter* of 28 Aug 1940: "Like most of his group, he was ill-informed on foreign affairs; and he did not know enough of England to understand either the good or bad of British policy" (6.121); and in "Hommage à Charles Maurras" (1948): "Par ailleurs, je noterai avec regret l'absence de sympathie que Maurras témoigne à mon pays." *Trans*: "I can only note with regret the absence of sympathy, which Maurras has sometimes manifested towards my country" (7.166, 169).

4. On 25 Oct 1927 TSE wrote to R. Gordon George: "The 'Action Française' includes personal friends of mine, including Maurras himself, and I have known and admired and been influenced by his work for nearly twenty years" (*L3* 778).

5. TSE quotes the opening line of Mallarmé's sonnet "Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe" [The Tomb of Edgar Poe] (1876). *Trans*: Such as in himself eternity changes him at last.

6. TSE misremembers the title of Maurras's *L'Avenir de l'intelligence* (1905). He had already singled out for praise this work and *Anthinéa* in his 1948 tribute to Maurras (7.165, 167), and would do so again in his letter to the editor of *Time and Tide* (7.775).

Charles Maurras

To the Editor of *Time and Tide*

Time and Tide, 34 (17 Jan 1953) 82

Sir, – The brief account of the career of the late Charles Maurras, given by Mr Desmond Ryan in your issue of 3 January is, in some respects, capable of modification. It is misleading to describe Maurras as a "Catholic Royalist." He was certainly a Royalist, though his form of Royalism proved unacceptable to the Pretender and his friends; and I understand that before his death he was reconciled to the Church and received the sacraments.[1] But throughout his life he was explicitly a rationalist – a disciple of Comte: and it was precisely his support of the Church solely on political and social grounds that exposed him to ecclesiastical censure and led to the condemnation of the *Action Française* in 1926.[2] I am not aware of his having been personally excommunicated, since he had not been a communicant. It is also misleading to term Maurras a "Fascist." He had formulated his own political philosophy long before "Fascism" was ever heard of. And if I am not mistaken, Fascism and Royalism are fundamentally incompatible.[3] Whether the *Camelots du Roy* were any "tougher" than other associations of young enthusiasts for political revolution, I leave to those who have had more direct acquaintance with their activities than I.[4]

I am glad that Mr Ryan acknowledges Maurras to have been, according to his lights, a patriot. So, I am sure, was Paul Éluard who was at least equally wrong-headed in his politics, though also a man of sympathetic personality.[5] But I believe that Maurras – and this is the main point of this letter – the author of *Anthinéa*, *L'Avenir de l'intelligence*, *Les Amants de Venise* and *La Leçon de Dante*, will be recognized as a great prose writer when Éluard's work has been reduced to a few very moving short poems preserved in anthologies.[6]

I am, etc.,
T. S. ELIOT

24 Russell Square, WC1

NOTES

1. In his "Letter from Paris," the journalist and historian Desmond Ryan (1893-1964) reflected on the recent deaths of Charles Maurras and Paul Éluard: "Maurras, the fierce, unrelenting editor of *L'Action Française*, with his Fascism, his anti-Semitism and his gang of would-be young toughs, Les Camelots du Roy, was a Catholic Royalist, excommunicated by the Pope and denounced by the Pretender" (12). The Pretender Philippe, Duke of Orléans (1869-1926), was the claimant to the French throne from 1894 until his death in 1926. Maurras's support for Catholicism and the monarchy was purely practical, in that he regarded a state religion as the only solution to secure public order.

2. In his *Christian News-Letter* of 28 Aug 1940, TSE explained that "the attitude of Maurras towards the Church was simple: he made no pretence of Christian belief, but supported the Church as a social institution making for stability" (6.122). This attitude led Pope Pius XI to put some of his works on the Index of Forbidden Books and to denounce the Action Française movement. In "The *Action Française*, M. Maurras and Mr. Ward" (1928), TSE reflected on Maurras's initial adherence to the philosophy of Auguste Comte, the father of Positivism: "What is remarkable about the thought of M. Maurras . . . is its gradual development from the humble and (I admit) grotesque origins of Positivism" (3.370).

3. Maurras's "integral nationalism," implying "classicism, monarchy, Catholicism," championed the pre-eminence of French interests over those of other countries, thus anticipating some of the notions of Fascism. In "The Literature of Fascism" (1928) TSE pointed out: "Most of the concepts which might have attracted me in fascism I seem already to have found, in a more digestible form, in the work of Charles Maurras. I say a more digestible form, because I think they have a closer applicability to England than those of fascism" (3.547).

4. In his *Criterion* commentary of Apr 1934, TSE reminisced about his "direct acquaintance" with the Camelots du Roi: "in 1910 I remember the *camelots* cheering the *cuirassiers* who were sent to disperse them, because they represented the Army, all the time that they were trying to stampede their horses" (5.82).

5. Ryan wrote that Maurras's "peculiar, though certainly sincere brand of patriotism . . . brought him, in his eighties, to death in a prison hospital, deprived of his Academic seat and a figure of legendary wrong-headedness," a death which he contrasted to that of the French Surrealist poet Paul Éluard, who died two days after Maurras on 18 Nov 1952: "The death of the poet Éluard . . . though it removes one of the trump cards from the Communist hand . . . caused universal mourning" (12).

6. Ryan stated that Éluard became the poet of the Resistance after the occupation, and that his poems and tracts "were dropped surreptitiously into letter boxes by night and some of them, notably 'Liberté,' were soon on everybody's lips" (12). On 12 Nov 1944, TSE reported to John Hayward that he received a "booklet of poems, not very impressive I thought, by Élouard [*sic*]" (King's). TSE conflates the title of his 1946 obituary for Paul Valéry, "Leçon de Valéry" (6.753), with Maurras's *Le Conseil de Dante* (1920), from which he quotes in the epigraph to *Dante* (1929), a book he dedicated to Maurras (3.696, n.1). TSE had already misremembered this title and singled out these works for praise in his 1948 homage to Maurras (see 7.170, n.2).

A Message from T. S. Eliot, O.M.

To the Editor of *ADAM International Review*

ADAM International Review, 21, No. 234 (1953) 9[1]

25 January 1953.

Dear Mr. Grindea,

I have always followed the fortunes of ADAM with interest and sympathy. I am honoured by your request that I should contribute to the issue commemorating the twenty-first anniversary.[2] Had I been able to find the time to do so, I should have wished to offer a contribution written for the occasion. Failing that, I should have been glad to offer an unpublished poem or fragment: but I should not care to send a passage from a play no part of which can be said to be in final form, and I have no poem to offer anyone.[3] I can, therefore, send only my greetings and felicitations, with the hope that ADAM, having survived so many difficult years, may now continue for many years to come, to preserve its peculiar distinction as an "international review."[4]

Yours very sincerely,
T. S. ELIOT

Miron Grindea Esqre.,
28, Emperor's Gate, S. W. 7.

NOTES

1. "Reproduced in facsimile. The letter was first printed on page [3] of a special souvenir programme prepared for the twenty-first birthday celebration in January" (Gallup 248).

2. The literary periodical *ADAM* (acronym for Arts, Drama, Architecture, and Music) was founded in Bucharest in 1929 and edited from 1938 by the Romanian journalist and critic Miron Grindea (1909-95), who moved to Britain in Sept 1939. The journal was revived in Sept 1941 as *ADAM International Review* and printed in London until 1988. TSE made two important contributions to *ADAM*: "Reflections on the Unity of European Culture" (1946) (see 6.734, n.1), and "The Aims of Poetic Drama" (1949) (7.376). In response to Orlo Williams's inquiry about the availability of the three talks on the unity of European culture, TSE wrote on 17 Mar 1947: "It is true that those talks are unavailable at present in England. I gave them to a very obscure periodical called *Adam* which nobody sees."

3. TSE was at this time working on *The Confidential Clerk*, which was first performed at the Edinburgh Festival in Aug 1953. In general, TSE rarely allowed his work to appear in truncated form in anthologies.

4. Grindea had written to TSE on 27 June 1950 to thank him "for all you have done towards ADAM's recovery." *ADAM*'s finances had always been uncertain, and the magazine was supported at various times by organizations like the Arts Council. Publication was interrupted during the war due to paper rationing, though it resumed in 1946. As editor, Grindea strove to make it a journal of international outlook. While his principal interest lay in French literature, he introduced British readers to a variety of other literatures and cultures, including those of the Caribbean, Denmark, Switzerland, and Holland.

Endorsement for The Player's Library of the British Drama League

On 19 Jan 1953, E. Martin Browne, president of the British Drama League (BDL), asked TSE as vice president to contribute to the League's forthcoming conference during Whitsun, 23-25 May. "With the best will in the world," TSE replied on 21 Jan, describing his burdensome writing commitments beforehand, "I don't see how I could do anything for the British Drama League Conference during Whit-week . . . but if there is any way in which I can appear to have a part in your Conference before leaving for the United States, without any preliminary preparation, let us consider it." After receiving Browne's revised request regarding the BDL's The Player's Library, TSE wrote on 28 Jan: "I am very willing to write a brief supporting statement on behalf of the Library and Catalogue, if you will tell me what you would like me to say, then I can put it into my own words." The single-page typescript of TSE's untitled endorsement is dated 9 Feb 1953.

The Library of the British Drama League is the most considerable collection of books in the United Kingdom on all subjects relating to drama and the theatre. Indeed, I am not aware of the existence of any comparable collection. It is of great value both to scholars and research students, and to individuals and societies, both professional and amateur, engaged in theatrical production.[1]

Such a collection, if it is to maintain its usefulness, must be constantly supplemented with new books; and increasing size, with increasing demands on its resources, require increasing support. Merely to keep the catalogue up to date demands constant attention. This catalogue is of great value for bibliographers, as well as for those actually consulting the works in the Library: and supplements ought to be issued at regular intervals.[2]

I give my most cordial support to any appeal for funds for the continuation and extension of the Library and the catalogue.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The BDL was founded in 1919 by Geoffrey Whitworth (1883-1951) with the aim of promoting the development of the art of the theater, though it was later involved primarily with amateur societies. Its first chair was Harley Granville-Barker. The League's library began with a donation of books from the theater manager Annie Horniman. E. Martin Browne explained that the library "is a working library for those who are actually producing plays, quite as much as for

the student of the literary or historical aspects. The rooms . . . are always full of readers seeking a new play to put on – and of directors wanting information about all the details of period, manners, and style for their play and about the history of its characters and its author." "The British Drama League," *Educational Theatre Journal*, 5 (Oct 1953), 203-06; here 204.

2. Browne pointed out: "The Catalogue of the Library was first published in 1930. When a new edition was called for after the war, the material assembled for 'The Player's Library' filled 1,100 pages. This book, which gives details of every play up to 1950, is the nearest thing in English to a complete bibliography of the theatre. It is the 'Bible' of thousands of producers, who plan their programs and base their study on it, and the scholar's chief work of reference. Theatre Arts Books distribute it in the United States; and with it the First Supplement, published in 1951. A Second Supplement is ready for printing" (204).

TSE wrote to the librarian of the BDL on 9 Oct 1953: "I have no objection to my letter of February 9th, 1953, about the Library of the British Drama League, being quoted appropriately in the announcement of your Second Supplement. There is no need, however, for you to forward the letter as I am passing on to the responsible [Faber] department the carbon copy of the letter in my possession." In the event, TSE's letter did not appear as planned in *Second Supplement to The Player's Library: The Catalogue of the Library of The British Drama League* (1954); however, excerpts from it were printed in Faber's announcement of the *Second Supplement* in its catalogue, *Faber Books: Spring & Summer 1954* (70-71).

Greeting to the Asociación de Artistas Aficionados[1]

Estimados señores:

He recibido su carta del 15 de enero, y estoy escribiendo simplemente para expresar mi simpatía y admiración a su ambicioso esfuerzo al aspirar presentar en un año, tantas obras maestras de la antigüedad clásica. Como ustedes bien lo pueden suponer, soy un convencido admirador de los dramaturgos griegos, y desearía que nosotros pudiéramos ver en este país, algunas de las obras que Lima va a gozar durante la dos próximas estaciones.

Con todos mis mejores deseos.

T. S. ELIOT

TRANSLATION

Dear Sirs,

I received your letter of 15 January, and I am writing simply to voice my sympathy and admiration for your ambitious effort to aspire to present in one year so many masterpieces of classical antiquity. As you may well imagine, I am a great admirer of the Greek dramatists, and I wish that we could see in this country some of the plays that Lima is going to enjoy in the next two theater seasons.

With all my best wishes,

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. As printed in *Revista programa: Ciclo de orígenes del teatro, invierno, 1953*, by the Academia de Arte Dramático de la Asociación de Artistas Aficionados. Lima: The Academy, 1953. N.p.

The theater group Asociación de Artistas Aficionados (Amateur Artists Association) was founded in Lima in 1938. Its members have included the actor and theater director Ricardo Blume, the director Ricardo Roca Rey, and the actor Luis Álvarez.

Foreword to *Shakespeare*, by Henri Fluchère

London: Longmans, Green, 1953. Pp. x + 272; Foreword, [v]-vii.[1]

In writing *Shakespeare: dramaturge élisabéthain* the author had no thought of addressing himself to an English-speaking audience. As he tells us in his preface, the book emerged out of his lectures to his pupils at the University of Aix-en-Provence during the years of the occupation;[2] and his modest intention, as he told me at the time of its publication in France, was to introduce French students of Shakespeare to the development of Shakespeare criticism in England during the previous quarter of a century.[3] For such a task M. Fluchère was exceptionally well qualified. He had pursued his English studies for several years at Cambridge University; he had become bilingual; his knowledge of English literature was exact and comprehensive;[4] he not only knew all the more recent English contributions to Shakespeare criticism, but was personally acquainted with some of their authors.[5] His experience as a translator (he had translated *Everyman* and my own *Murder in the Cathedral* into French)[6] had given him an understanding of the correspondences and what I may call the *reciprocal inadequacies* of the two languages, which cannot be acquired in any other way. As one of the authors whose work he has translated, I feel qualified to pronounce this encomium.

My purpose in writing this preface, however, is not to praise M. Fluchère as an interpreter of English literature to French readers, but to affirm the value of this book for English-speaking readers and students of Shakespeare. Its author's qualities, as scholar and critic, far exceed the requirements of his original purpose. I am not acquainted with any recent English work which serves the same need as this of M. Fluchère – not only giving us a conspectus of Shakespeare's drama as a whole, but exhibiting that drama in its relation to the other masterpieces of the Elizabethan theatre, and taking account of recent studies by English critics. Even had he done no more than summarize the conclusions of English criticism in the last twenty-five years, he would have written a book useful to English readers. But he has done much more: his book commends itself to us because of the value of the author's own ideas, which are supported by his combination of scholarship with understanding and experience of the theatre.

At the present stage of Shakespeare criticism, the critic who would give a well-balanced interpretation of Shakespeare's total work needs a number of qualifications not commonly found together.[7] The ideal Shakespeare critic should be a scholar, with knowledge not of Shakespeare in isolation, but of Shakespeare in relation to the Elizabethan Theatre in which he is only one, though very much the greatest, of the masters, and of that Theatre in relation to the social, political, economic and religious conditions of its time. He should also be a poet; and he should be a "man of the theatre." And he should have a philosophic mind. Shakespeare criticism cannot be written by a committee consisting of a number of specialized scholars, a dramatist, a producer, an actor, a poet and a philosopher: each of them would be incompetent without sharing some of the knowledge and capacities of the others. Certainly, to be a poet or a philosopher is not enough. A poet is not a qualified interpreter, unless he understands the particular technique of *dramatic* verse. In order to understand dramatic verse he must needs have had some success in writing it; and if his dramatic verse is to be really dramatic he must acquire also the point of view of the producer, the actor and the audience. To understand Shakespeare he must understand the theatre of his own time – but also the differences between the theatre of his own time and that of Shakespeare's time; he should know the latter, not merely as an antiquary, but from the point of view of the producer, the actor and the audience of Shakespeare's time. For such understanding, both scholarship and imagination are required. Nor is the philosophic critic, without the other qualifications, in better case than the poet. The philosopher needs to understand the nature of poetry, if he is to avoid the danger of confusing the philosophical ideas which can be elicited from a poem with a system of philosophical belief which can be attributed to the author. And it follows from what I have said above that he needs also to understand the special conditions of the stage, the peculiar kind of reality manifested by those personages of the stage who strike us as most "real," if he is to avoid the error of analysing dramatic characters as if they were living men and women, or figures from the historical past.

Our demands upon the Shakespeare critic have, in our time, become exacting. The number of important specialized investigations – historical, social, linguistic, and studies of imagery and symbolism in Shakespeare – have to be taken into account by the critic who aims to consider the work of Shakespeare in all its aspects. But perhaps more than any other single writer, Mr. Harley Granville-Barker by his Prefaces, illuminating the plays

with the understanding of the producer, has suggested the need for a synthesis of the several points of view from which Shakespeare can be studied.[8]

The reader will judge for himself of the proportions in which M. Fluchère possesses all the qualifications I have named: but I am convinced that M. Fluchère has been able, to an exceptional degree, to put himself at one after another of these points of view. In passing from one section to another of his book, I have been struck by his comprehension of all the problems involved – whether of the conditions of the theatre, of the particular conditions and aims of the Elizabethan theatre, of the nature of dramatic poetry, or of the development of Shakespeare's style from first to last.[9] And, incidentally, I have noted with admiration his penetrating remarks upon the work of Shakespeare's contemporaries, notably Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Printed on 13 Apr. Translation by Guy Hamilton of *Shakespeare, dramaturge élisabéthain* ([Marseille]: Cahiers du Sud, 1948). The book was published in New York by Hill and Wang in 1956 as *Shakespeare and the Elizabethans*. TSE wrote to Geoffrey Faber on 5 Feb 1952 that he had two prefaces to write, "one for Henri Fluchère, to repay one good turn by another," Fluchère having recently translated TSE's *The Cocktail Party*, *The Family Reunion*, and "The Aims of Poetic Drama" for Éditions du Seuil (1952).

2. The French critic, translator, and professor at the Université d'Aix-en-Provence Henri Fluchère (1898-1987), a friend of TSE and translator of his prose and drama, was the first director of the Maison française d'Oxford from 1946 to 1963 and later became president of the Société française Shakespeare. He was instrumental in the formation of an Elizabethan research center in Aix-en-Provence. Fluchère stated at the end of the preface: "I should add that the ideas in it formed the basis of my lectures at the University of Aix-en-Provence during the years of the German occupation" (x).

3. The comment may have been made in conversation, but possibly in a missing letter, as TSE wrote to Fluchère on 1 May 1948: "I have just started the *Shakespeare*. I hope that the book will get the attention I can already see it deserves, in France; but I should imagine that there must be professors who will resist hav[ing] their ideas brought up to date. It ought, I think, to make an impression here too; but more about that when I have read it all."

4. In his "Answers to the Interviewer of Radiodiffusion française" on 19 Jan 1949, TSE paid tribute to Fluchère's mastery of English language and literature: "M. Henri Fluchère parle anglais comme moi, et connait la littérature anglaise mieux que moi" (King's H2j). *Trans*: Mr. Henri Fluchère speaks English as well as I do and knows English literature better than I do.

5. Fluchère acknowledges his debt to the following critics in his preface: "T. S. Eliot, Dover Wilson, Granville-Barker, F. R. Leavis, L. C. Knights, and Wilson Knight, to mention only a few" ([ix]).

6. *Tout-homme. Sur le thème de la moralité anglaise Everyman* (1936). Fluchère's translation of TSE's play *Meurtre dans la cathédrale* came out in 1943. He later translated other of TSE's plays as well as several essays and unpublished addresses.

7. The two paragraphs from "At the present stage" to "can be studied" were excerpted and titled "The Ideal Shakespeare Critic" by the editor of the *Shakespeare Newsletter*, 3 (Nov 1953), 35.

8. Harley Granville-Barker produced a number of Shakespeare's plays at the Savoy Theatre in 1912 and 1914. In his *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (1927-47), he examined the plays from the viewpoint of the producer rather than the critic. TSE had praised him in "The Development of Shakespeare's Verse. Two Lectures" (1937) as "a writer who has put us in his debt by his contributions to the understanding of Shakespeare from the point of view of a practical dramatic producer" (5.531).

9. The book is divided into three parts: "The Spirit of the Age"; "Technique" (with further subheadings on Order; Conventions and Traditions; The Stage; Space, Time; Action; The Characters; Language); and "The Themes."

Presidential address to the Alliance française [II]

The Annual General Meeting of the Fédération britannique des comités de l'Alliance française was originally scheduled for Bournemouth but took place in Bristol from 23 to 25 May 1953; TSE delivered his address on the afternoon of 23 May and responded to the toast at the Annual Banquet in the evening (7.790).

Though TSE continued to serve as president until Mar 1955, this was evidently his last formal address to the Fédération, due to illness and convalescence during the next two years. After John Lehmann succeeded him in early Mar 1955, TSE wrote to Henri Jourdan, a vice president of the Fédération and director of the Institut français in London, on 10 Mar: "I am at least happy to have served the Alliance Française to the best of my abilities, in a capacity for which neither natural endowment nor previous experience had qualified me. I shall continue to take a lively interest in the affairs of the Fédération Britannique, and also, of course, in the Institut Français, and I assure you, and wish to assure the Conseil, that I value very highly the tribute paid me by joining my name to that of Lord de la Warr as a Président Honoraire." TSE misspells "Secrétaire" as "Sécrétaire" (with an acute accent on the first "e") in this TS and his response to the toast at the Annual Banquet that evening, corrected in both places.

A year ago, in Edinburgh, I found that I survived the ordeal of presiding for the first time over the ceremonies and deliberations of this Assembly.[1] The Fédération has now survived the ordeal of a year of my Chairmanship. I have hopes that a second year may not kill it. To put it that way, however, is perhaps to give an exaggerated view of the Chairman's importance. During this past year, circumstances and the nature of my work have conspired to keep me continuously in London, instead of taking me abroad; so I have, I think, a pretty close acquaintance with the affairs of the Fédération, as they appear to the man sitting at the head of the council table. I assure you from my knowledge, that the life of the central organism of the Fédération depends upon two things: the energy, enthusiasm, sagacity and imagination of the Secrétaire-Général of the Fédération, and the fidelity and wisdom of the Conseil.[2] I should like to pay my tribute to both. I cannot speak too warmly of the loyalty of those members who attend our meetings regularly, some coming from a distance, and all busy people, of the judgment they bring to bear on our discussions, and of the patience they display, during many harassing wrangles, with their Chairman – and with each other. There are few things, in my experience, so trying to the temper, and such a test of benevolence on the part of all concerned, as a committee meeting which

goes on so long as to interfere with the time-tables of all the members present.

Of the difficult problems, some of them critical, which have presented themselves to the members of the Conseil during the past year, I shall not speak to-day; but reserve them for Monday morning, when we shall ask the delegates and members to share them with us. It is more fitting to-day, in the light of a year's experience, to reaffirm my belief in the permanent and increasing value of the work for which the Fédération was founded. Of the importance of maintaining the historic cultural bond between our two countries I have spoken before, and may speak again.[3] But this morning I choose to speak rather of the need of forever continuing to adapt our means of communication to the changing historical situation, and of the fitness of the Fédération to perform this work of liaison in the contemporary world. The Fédération Britannique was founded early in the present century. Why is it a twentieth century invention? Did it come to fill a need which has always been present, but which had hitherto been unnoticed; or did it arise to fill a new need of our time? I think, the latter; but I add the observation, that I think that the kind of work it does will continue to be important, for as far into the future as conjecture can reach.

In the eighteenth century, to go no further back, the cultural and intellectual influence of France and England upon each other was very strong: the consequences of that commerce have been important not for these two countries alone, but for the whole world. In the world of abstract ideas, English philosophy had a powerful influence in France; this influence was reflected back to England by the French philosophers of the Enlightenment. On another level, the effect of the exile, during the Great Rebellion, of the Court of Charles II to St. Germain, started a tradition which was prolonged until the Napoleonic Wars: such names as those of Bolingbroke and Horace Walpole are sufficient evidence. (Exile, incidentally, was not a one-way traffic – as the monument of St. Évremond in Westminster Abbey attests.)[4] But it may be argued that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, culminating in the tremendous impact of Rousseau, was the period during which English culture was gallicised in such a way as to leave a permanent mark upon us for the rest of history.

The point to which I am coming is this: that in those centuries the cultural intercourse between England and France was the affair of a very small number of people. To the great majority of the population, even of the educated population, the other country was unknown. Even throughout

the nineteenth century the comic illustrators give evidence: the comic Englishman of the French press, always in very loud check tweeds and a pair of binoculars, and the comic Frenchman of the English press, who, even if he was climbing a mountain, was invariably attired in a conical top hat and a frock coat – what has become of them? They are perhaps a loss to the music halls of both nations, but are otherwise unregretted. In fact, we know too much about each other, and have in some ways become too similar, to find each other absurd.

Now, to be more serious, I think that the work of cultural contact between our two countries must always be performed by an élite. Only, under modern conditions, the élite must be larger, must do its work in a different way, and therefore be differently constituted. Nowadays, it includes even the classical dons in universities: for the age is past, in which a learned English scholar could compose verses (I do not say poetry) in Latin and Greek but know no modern language except his own. With the development of democracy, it becomes more and more important that the whole people of each country should have a tolerant sympathy, and at least an incipient affection, for the people of the other. Hence a much larger élite is necessary, of English people interested in French literature, French thought, French culture. The bigger the lump, the bigger the leaven. And it is up to the members of the Fédération Britannique to be the leaven.

For the Fédération has two important characteristics. In the first place, it responds, not to any desire of the French to sell us their culture, but to the spontaneous insistence of English people that they must have it. In the second place, it is not a mere organisation of esoteric groups of people who hold themselves aloof, in their meetings, from the common herd of folk in order to listen to a lecture which their neighbours couldn't understand. The circles are, of course, at the time of their formation, associations of people who know that they want contact with France. But there is a larger public which wants this contact but doesn't know that it wants it. So that every member of a circle should be a kind of evangelist. Conversion, you know, is not a matter of changing a man into a different man; it is a process, whether sudden or gradual, by which a man has a revelation of something that he had always longed for without knowing it. And your converts will, in turn, become leaven; and in a modern democracy, help that democracy to avoid what is its greatest peril, that of becoming a depersonalised mass culture.[5]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE delivered his first presidential address in Edinburgh on 7 June 1952 (7.741).

2. Five days earlier, on 18 May, TSE wrote a letter of reference for Claude Chailley, who had become a close friend and served as Secrétaire général "during all the years in which I have been associated with [the Fédération] myself, first as one of the Vice Presidents, and during the past year as Chairman (Président). . . . This position . . . demands more than ordinary administrative ability: it requires also initiative, enthusiasm and tact. . . . I can speak most highly of the impression he has made upon me . . . by his personality and his social gifts. I regard his translation to another sphere of activity as a serious loss to the Fédération Britannique."

The Conseil is the committee of the Fédération britannique, of which TSE was chair. Other members were J. C. Grumbar, MBE; Henri Jourdan; W. C. Walgate; Lt.-Colonel Charles Dumas, MC; Jean Malbert; Sir Eugen Millington-Drake, KCMG; H. Paniguian; and Mme. J. Thomas de Turville. The Conseil determined the venue, program, and speakers for the annual Assemblée générale; approved the projects and reports of its financial, cultural, and membership committees; and awarded diplomas and medals.

3. TSE discussed the importance of the long-standing "intellectual bonds between Britain and France" in his "Speech at dinner of the Alliance française" on 19 Jan 1949 (7.315).

4. During the English Civil War, Charles II (1630-85) joined his mother, Queen Henrietta Maria, sister of the late King Louis XIII of France, at Saint-Germain near Paris in June 1646, and he lived there until 1648. Following his support of the Jacobite rebellion, the Tory leader and philosopher Henry St. John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751) fled to France in 1715, where he wrote the essay "Reflections upon Exile" (1716). During his Grand Tour (1739-41) with Thomas Gray, Horace Walpole also spent time in France and visited Marseille, Aix, Montpellier, Toulouse, and Paris. Saint-Évremond went into exile in 1661 due to his criticism of the Treaty of the Pyrenees, signed between France and Spain in 1659. He died in London and was buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey; a white marble monument of him is in the east aisle.

5. TSE wrote to Claude Chailley on 27 May 1953 that he is having Miss Fletcher send a fair copy of his address "for the report of the Assemblée Générale." The report is untraced; in the fair copy TSE deleted the closing remark from his reading copy: "Your Chairman has always to address you on these occasions, but also he must not address you at too great length: for he has another, more important function, that of presenting to you more distinguished speakers." He then went on to introduce Georges Duhamel, the first Président honoraire of the Alliance française; Émile Henriot, Président général of the Alliance française; Marc Blancpain, Secrétaire général of the Alliance française in Paris; and Roger Seydoux, Directeur général of Cultural Affairs at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Response to the toast at the Annual Banquet of the Alliance française

The banquet took place in Bristol on the evening of 23 May 1953; during the day, TSE delivered the presidential address (7.786). He wrote to Professor W. McCausland Stewart on 14 May 1953: "I will accept the responsibility of responding to the evening toast of the Alliance after [Marc] Blancpain."

M. Le Secrétaire Général has replied to the toast of the Alliance Française.[1] If I conceived it my function to respond to exactly the same toast, I should be visibly embarrassed: for I should be emulating a much better orator than myself; and I fear that the English language, as well as myself, might suffer by the comparison, for we never seem to be able to phrase our thanks as gracefully as our French friends. But I have chosen the humbler task of responding to a part of the toast: on behalf, not of the Alliance itself but of the Fédération Britannique.

To this responsibility I address myself with alacrity. The Fédération is a modest and self-effacing organisation which does its work with little publicity: we do not often hit the headlines. I hope that whenever a distinguished French visitor lectures at one of our circles, the local press pays its due respects; but most of the work done both in the central office and in the local centres, passes unnoticed. Only once a year we have our annual bust; and besides the festivities, the formal addresses, and the general meeting to raise ourselves in our own estimation, we enjoy a reflected glory from the eminence of our hosts and our guests. The usefulness of our work depends upon the vitality of the local centres; the vitality of the local centres depends very often upon the enthusiasm and unselfish devotion of a few animating spirits, unknown to the outside world, the loyalty of some of whom we endeavour to recognise annually by our *récompenses*. You, our hosts, cannot realise how much encouragement, in our obscure labours, is given by your hospitality.

I have found in the past that I have always looked forward to this General Assembly with feelings of apprehension, but that I have always looked back upon it with satisfaction. This may be partly due to a happy failure to remember my own speeches. But on this particular occasion, when I read the schedule sent me, the programme of all the entertainment provided for

us, the list of the distinguished patrons, the recognition by the City, the University and the Academy; the cooperation of Bristol, Bath, Cheltenham and Bordeaux in our honour, I felt more intimidated than usual. You have, furthermore, done us an unprecedented honour, by forcing some of us into tail coats and other distinguishing marks. I confess that, now that I am approaching the end of this response, an anticipation of my subsequent satisfaction is stealing over me.

May I say, in closing, that I have a personal, if somewhat idiotic, reason for special pleasure on this occasion. I am myself, by descent though not by domicile, a West Countryman;[2] and I am happy that not only our French guests but also our members from other parts of England should see how the West does things. They will have a further opportunity of being impressed by the civilisation of the West on an expedition tomorrow. I thank you on behalf of the Fédération. You have not only made us happy here; you have given us the inestimable feeling that we represent an organisation of some importance.[3]

NOTES

1. The toast "à l'Alliance française" was proposed by Émile Henriot, Président général of the Alliance française; the respondents were, successively, Marc Blancpain, Secrétaire général of the Alliance française; Claude Chailley, Secrétaire général of the Fédération britannique; and TSE, Président of the Fédération britannique.

2. TSE's ancestor Andrew Eliot moved from East Coker, Somerset, to Beverly, Massachusetts around 1668. In a letter to John Hayward of 31 Mar 1937, TSE signed himself: "Th. Eliot of Somerset" (King's).

3. In thanking the Lord Mayor of Bristol for his patronage, TSE wrote on 16 July: "A great deal of the vitality of the Fédération Britannique is due to the stimulus given to it by these annual assemblies. To have enjoyed the patronage of the Lord Mayor of Bristol, as well as the official benediction of the University, has been an asset of much greater value to us than you can realise. I have, therefore, to thank you not only for your generous hospitality and for your personal gift of time and energy, but for the further benefits of which you could not otherwise be aware. It was generally agreed that we have never had a more brilliant Annual Assembly."

TEXTUAL NOTE

The two-page typescript, with TSE's pencil and ink holograph emendations, is in the Hayward Bequest (H1h), King's College. Attached to the text is a six-line poem, "Vers d'Occasion de M. Émile Henriot," Président général de l'Alliance française, initialed "EH."

American Literature and the American Language[1]

[St. Louis, Missouri: Washington University, 1953]. Pp. 24.

It is almost exactly forty-eight years ago, that I made my first appearance on a public platform before a large audience. This was at the graduation exercises of the Class of 1905 of Smith Academy, an offshoot of this University; and my part in the ceremony was to deliver the valedictory poem of the year.[2] I was informed afterwards, by one of my teachers, that the poem itself was excellent, as such poems go, but that my delivery was very bad indeed. Since then I have made some progress in elocution, and I have been more often criticised for the content of my speeches than for my manner of delivery; but I knew that to-day I should experience something like the trepidation which I well remember feeling on that evening so long ago. When I sat down to prepare my notes for this address, I found myself distracted by so many memories of my early years, that I was tempted either to talk about nothing else, or to pass them all over in silence. The first alternative would have produced something too personal and autobiographic for the dignity of this occasion; the second would have meant the suppression of feelings which I do not wish to suppress. I shall therefore, before proceeding to my subject, say something to indicate what it means to me to be here in St. Louis and to be speaking at Washington University in the hundredth year since its foundation; and I trust that a preamble somewhat longer than usual will not be amiss.

It is the fact that this is the centennial year of the University, that gives me the excuse, as well as the stronger urge, to allude to my own upbringing. The early history of this University which my grandfather served with tireless devotion until his death, is inextricably involved for me in family and personal history.[3] I never knew my grandfather: he died a year before my birth. But I was brought up to be very much aware of him: so much so, that as a child I thought of him as still the head of the family – a ruler for whom *in absentia* my grandmother stood as vicegerent. The standard of conduct was that which my grandfather had set; our moral judgements, our decisions between duty and self-indulgence, were taken as if, like Moses, he had brought down the tables of the Law, any deviation from which would be sinful. Not the least of these laws, which included injunctions still more than

prohibitions, was the law of Public Service: it is no doubt owing to the impress of this law upon my infant mind that, like other members of my family, I have felt, ever since I passed beyond my early irresponsible years, an uncomfortable and very inconvenient obligation to serve upon committees. This original Law of Public Service operated especially in three areas: the Church, the City, and the University. The Church meant, for us, the Unitarian Church of the Messiah, then situated in Locust Street, a few blocks west of my father's house and my grandmother's house; the City was St. Louis – the utmost outskirts of which touched on Forest Park, terminus of the Olive Street streetcars, and to me, as a child, the beginning of the Wild West; the University was Washington University, then housed in a modest building in lower Washington Avenue. These were the symbols of Religion, the Community, and Education: and I think it is a very good beginning for any child, to be brought up to reverence such institutions, and to be taught that personal and selfish aims should be subordinated to the general good which they represent.

Unlike my father, my uncles, my brother, and several of my cousins, I was never enrolled as an undergraduate in Washington University, but was sent to another institution with which also there were family associations. But the earlier part – and I believe, the most important part – of my education is what I received in that preparatory department of the University which was named Smith Academy. My memories of Smith Academy are on the whole happy ones; and when, many years ago, I learned that the school had come to an end, I felt that a link with the past had been painfully broken.[4] It was a good school. There, one was taught, as is now increasingly rare everywhere, what I consider the essentials: Latin and Greek, together with Greek and Roman history, English and American history, elementary mathematics, French and German. Also English! I am happy to remember that in those days English composition was still called *Rhetoric*. Lest you infer that the curriculum was incredibly primitive, I will add that there was a laboratory, in which physical and chemical experiments were performed successfully by the more adroit. As I failed to pass my entrance examination in physics, you will not be surprised that I have forgotten the name of the master who taught it. But I remember other names of good teachers, my gratitude to whom I take this opportunity of recording: Mr. Jackson in Latin, Mr. Robinson in Greek, Mr. Rowe – though I was not one of his good pupils – in mathematics, Madame Jouvet-Kauffmann and Miss Chandler in French and German respectively. Mr. Hatch, who taught English, commended

warmly my first poem, written as a class exercise, at the same time asking me suspiciously if I had had any help in writing it. Mr. Jeffries I think taught modern history; our ancient history was taught by the Greek and Latin masters.[5] Well! so far as I am educated, I must pay my first tribute to Smith Academy; if I had not been well taught there, I should have been unable to profit elsewhere. And so far as I am badly educated, that is attributable to laziness and caprice. And before passing from the subject of Smith Academy, I wish to say that I remember it as a good school also because of the boys who were there with me: it seems to me that, for a school of small numbers, we were a well-mixed variety of local types.

Many other memories have invaded my mind, since I received the invitation to speak to you to-day; but I think these are enough to serve as a token of my thoughts and feelings. I am very well satisfied with having been born in St. Louis: in fact I think I was fortunate to have been born here, rather than in Boston, or New York, or London.

The title I have chosen for this address seems to indicate that I have two subjects. Why am I talking about both: "American literature," and "the American language"? First, because they are related, and second because they must be distinguished. It is profitable to clear our minds about the meaning of the term "the American language" before proceeding to talk of American literature. As I have a reputation for affecting pedantic precision, a reputation I should not like to lose, I will add that I shall not ask "what is literature?" However various may be people's notions as to what printed matter is literature and what is not, such differences of taste and judgement do not affect my problem.

My attention was recently recalled to this question of the differences between the English and the American language, on receiving a copy of a new American dictionary. It appeared to me an excellent dictionary of its size, and likely to be useful in England as well as in this country; and to those interested in the making of dictionaries and the problems arising in the definition of words, I commend also a pamphlet by one of the editors, Mr. David B. Guralnik, which struck me as very sound sense.[6] But I was puzzled by the sub-title: it is called a dictionary "of the American language." Perhaps I am unconsciously bi-lingual, so that whichever language I hear or read seems to me my own; but certainly the vast majority of the words in this dictionary are words belonging to both America and England, and having the same meaning in both. And the definitions seemed to me to be written in English too. True, the spelling, where English and American usage differ,

was the American spelling: but this presents no difficulty in England, where various editions of the work of Noah Webster (a famous lexicographer who I believe married my great-aunt) are in current use.[7] And about spelling, I do not believe in hard and fast rules, and least of all in the hard and fast rules of champions of simplified spelling, such as the late Bernard Shaw.[8] I hold that a word is something more than the noise it makes: it is also the way it looks on the page. I am averse to simplified spelling which destroys all traces of a word's origin and history. But I think, for example, that the English would do well to omit, from a word like "labour," the superfluous U, which appears to be merely an etymological error. As to whether "centre" should be spelt "centre" or "center," that seems to me a matter of indifference. There is much to be said for the American spelling "catalog"; on the other hand I distrust simplifications of spelling that tend to alter pronunciation, as, for example, the shortening of "programme" to "program," which throws the stress onto the first syllable. And I think that the advocates of a systematic simplified spelling – such as those who recently introduced a Bill in Parliament[9] – overlook the fact that in attempting to fix spelling phonetically, they are also attempting to fix pronunciation: and both pronunciation and spelling, in both England and America, must inevitably change from age to age under the pressure of usage and convenience.

Apart from the differences of spelling and pronunciation, the only other important difference which I discovered between this dictionary and the standard dictionaries in England, is that a number of words are included, which have not yet found their way into the latter. I was gratified, for instance, to find *grifter* and *shill*, two words which I first encountered in a fascinating book about one specialised area of the American vocabulary, called *The Big Con*.[10] And about such words as *grifter* and *shill* I am willing to risk a prediction. Either they will disappear from the American vocabulary, to be replaced by newer and shinier words with the same meaning, or, if they become permanently settled, as Dr. Guralnik expects, they will find their way into the English vocabulary as well, and eventually into a supplement to the great Oxford dictionary.[11] They will first appear in the vocabulary of that very large section of British society whose speech is constantly enriched from the films, and will make their way through the tabloid press to *The Times*, in *The Times* proceeding from the levity of the fourth editorial article to the solemnity of the first editorial article; and so their dictionary status in Britain will be assured. Many new words, of course, are ephemeral; and as Dr. Guralnik, in the essay to which I have referred, ruefully admits, a

lexicographer may make the mistake of admitting a word to his dictionary just as it is on the point of going out of fashion: a mistake not unlike that of buying shares in a company just before its compulsory liquidation.[12] Words can even disappear, and come into currency again after a period of seclusion. When I was a small boy, in this city, I was reproved by my family for using the vulgar phrase "O.K." Then there was a period during which it seemed to have expired; but at some subsequent date it came to life again, and twenty-odd years ago swept like a tidal wave over England, to establish itself in English speech. As for its respectability here, I hold the most convincing piece of evidence yet: it occurs in a cable I received from Professor Cardwell.[13]

Apart from some differences of spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary, there are between English and American a number of differences of idiom, for the most part reciprocally intelligible; there are also a few dangerous idioms, the same phrases with totally different meanings – in some cases leading to awkward misunderstanding and embarrassment. The sum total of these differences, however, does not seem to me to go so far as to justify us in speaking of English and American as different languages; the differences are no greater than between English as spoken in England and as spoken in Ireland, and negligible compared to the difference between English and Lowland Scots. But we must carry the question further, and ask: is it probable that speech in England and speech in America are developing in such a way that we can predict the eventual division into two languages, so distinct that each country will provide one more foreign language for the school curriculum of the other?

Perhaps we can draw some conclusions from the transformations of languages in the past. The obvious examples, of course, are the decline of Latin and its transmutation into the several Romance languages; and the development from Sanskrit, through Pali, of the modern Indian languages Bengali, Mahratti and Gujarati. I make no pretence of being a philologist; but even to a person untrained in that science there is a striking parallel between the relation of Italian to Latin, and the relation of Pali to Sanskrit. It would at first sight seem within the bounds of possibility, that in the course of time American speech and writing might come to differ as much from present-day English, as Italian and Bengali differ from Latin and Sanskrit.

The question has, of course, no bearing on the literature of to-day; and far from presenting a pleasing prospect to a living author, it is one which he must shudder to contemplate. Even if we refrain from calling our works

"immortal," we all of us like to believe that what we write will go on being read for a very long time indeed. We cannot relish the thought that our poems and plays and novels will, at best, be preserved only in texts heavily annotated by learned scholars, who will dispute the meaning of many passages and will be completely in the dark as to how our beautiful lines should be pronounced. Most of us, we know, have a pretty good chance of oblivion anyway; but to those of us who succeed in dying in advance of our reputations, the assurance of a time when our writings will only be grappled with by two or three graduate students in Middle Anglo-American 42 B is very distasteful. As it would not have pleased a late Latin poet in Southern Gaul to be told by a soothsayer that his language, over which he took so much trouble, would in a few centuries be replaced by something more up-to-date.

We must also face the possibility, if we can draw any conclusions from the metamorphosis of Latin, of a long period of time during which everything written in our language will be arid, pedantic and imitative. It is, of course, a necessary condition for the continuance of a literature, that the language should be in constant change. If it is changing it is alive; and if it does not change, then new writers have no escape from imitating classics of their literature without hope of producing anything so good. But when a change occurs such as that which led to the supersession of Latin by French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, the new languages have to grow up from the roots of the old, that is, from the common speech of uneducated people, and for a long time will be crude and capable of expressing only a narrow range of simple thoughts and feelings. The old culture had to decline, before the new cultures could develop. And for the development of a new and crude language into a great language, how much is not due to the happy accident of a few writers of great genius, such as Dante or Shakespeare?

Is the parallel with Latin and Sanskrit, however, valid? Is such a transformation, for better or worse, of English into two distinct languages on the two sides of the Atlantic likely to take place? I think that the circumstances nowadays are very different. If such a transformation should occur, it will be due to social, political and economic changes very different from anything that is happening now, and on such a vast scale that we cannot even imagine them. There is, I suspect, behind the thinking of such students of language as Mr. Mencken (whose monumental book on the American language is a philologist's picnic) a mistaken assimilation of language to politics. Such prophets seem to be issuing a kind of linguistic Declaration of

Independence, an act of emancipation of American from English. But these patriotic spirits may be overlooking the other side of the picture.[14]

In October last occurred an event which, while not as spectacular as the descent of Col. Lindbergh at Le Bourget in "The Spirit of St. Louis," is equally remarkable in its kind.[15] For the first time, apparently, an American robin, well named *turdus migratorius*, crossed the Atlantic under its own power, "favoured" according to the report, by "a period of strong westerly weather." This enterprising bird was also intelligent, for it chose to alight on Lundy Island, off the coast of Devon, which happens to be a bird sanctuary. Of course even birds, nowadays, are not allowed to travel without undergoing official inquisition, so our robin was trapped, photographed, and released; and, I hope, provided with a ration book. It is interesting to speculate on the future of this pilgrim. Either he (or she, for the sex is not stated) will be followed by another of the opposite sex, in which event we may expect that England will soon be populated by American robins; or else our lone pioneer must make the best of it, and breed with the English thrush, who is not *migratorius* but *musicus*. In the latter event, the English must look out for a new species of thrush, with a faint red spot on the male breast in springtime; a species which, being a blend of migratorius and musicus, should become known as the troubadour-bird, or organ-grinder.[16]

Now, if the American robin can perform such feats, what cannot the American language do? Favoured by very strong westerly weather, of course. Unless you yourselves draw a linguistic iron curtain (and I think Hollywood, to say nothing of the proprietors of *Time*, *Life*, *The New Yorker* and other periodicals, would object to that) you cannot keep the American language out of England. However fast the American language moves, there will be always behind it the pattering of feet: the feet of the great British public eager for a new word or phrase. The feet may sometimes be a long way behind, but they are tireless. In the long run, I don't see how you can keep the American language to yourselves. Britain is of course eager also to export, though baffled by tariff walls; but it seems that at present the current of language flows from west to east. The last war strengthened the flow in that direction; and people from Land's End to John o' Groats are nourished on American films, the speech of which they understand, I have been told, a good deal better than the American public understands that of British films. It may be, that this west-east current will be the stronger for a long time to come: but, whatever happens, I believe that there will always be a movement in one direction or the other. So that, against the influences towards the

development of separate languages, there will always be other influences tending towards fusion.

It has seemed to me worth while to get this question of language out of the way before attempting to say what I mean by American Literature: as I believe that we are now justified in speaking of what has never, I think, been found before, two literatures in the same language.

When, however, I assert that the term "American literature" has for me a clear and distinct meaning, I do not believe that this meaning is wholly definable; and I shall try to explain in what respect I think it is undesirable to try to define it. Like many other terms, the term "American literature" has altered and developed its meaning in the course of time. It means something different for us to-day from what it could have meant a hundred years ago. It has much fuller meaning now than it could have had then. By this I do not mean that American literature of the nineteenth century is less deserving of the name than American literature of the twentieth. I mean that the phrase could not mean quite the same thing to the writers of a century ago that it means to us; that it is only in retrospect that their Americanness is fully visible. At the beginning, to speak of "American literature" would have been only to establish a geographical distinction: Jonathan Edwards could hardly have understood what the term means to-day.[17] Early American literature, without the achievements of later writers, would merely be literature written in English by men born or living in America. Washington Irving is less distinctively American than Fenimore Cooper. I suspect that the Leatherstocking novels, to a contemporary English reader, must have appeared to depict, not a new and different society, but the adventures of English pioneers in new and undeveloped country; just as I suppose they still have, for English boys, much the same fascination as good tales of adventure of early life in British dominions and colonies anywhere.[18] (Cooper has suffered, like Walter Scott, from being read in early youth, and by many people never read again: it remained for D. H. Lawrence, who discovered Cooper later in life, to write probably the most brilliant of critical essays on him.)[19] The English reader of the day, certainly, would hardly have recognized in Natty Bumppo, a new kind of man: it is only in retrospect that such differences are visible.

The literature of nineteenth century New England, however, is patently marked by something more than the several personalities of its authors: it has its own particular *civilised* landscape and the ethos of a local society of English origin with its own distinct traits. It remains representative of New

England, rather than of America: and Longfellow, Whittier, Bryant, Emerson, Thoreau – and even the last of the pure New Englanders, Robert Frost – yield more of themselves, I believe, to people of New England origin than to others; they have, in addition to their qualities of wider appeal, a peculiar nostalgic charm for New Englanders settled elsewhere. And as for the writer who to me is the greatest among them, Nathaniel Hawthorne, it seems to me that there is something in Hawthorne that can best be appreciated by the reader with Calvinism in his bones and witch-hanging (*not* witch-hunting) on his conscience.[20] So the landmarks I have chosen for the identification of American literature are not found in New England. I am aware that my choice may appear arbitrary; but in making such wide generalisations one must always take the risk. The three authors of my choice are Poe, Whitman, and Mark Twain.

I must hasten to explain what I do *not* mean. I do not imply that these writers are necessarily greater than others whom I have mentioned or could mention. Nor am I suggesting that these three men were individually "more American" than others. Nor am I suggesting that American literature today *derives* from these three. Nor am I assuming that from a study of these three writers one could arrive at a formula of Americanism in literature. What their common American characteristics may be, is something I should consider it folly to attempt to define; and in seeking for their common qualities, one might easily overlook the essence of each.

I wish to emphasise the point that I am not concerned, in making such a selection, with questions of *influence*. A comparison of Poe and Whitman is illuminating. Amongst American poets, it is undoubtedly Poe and Whitman who have enjoyed the highest reputation abroad, both in English-speaking lands and in countries where they are known in translation. What is remarkable about the posthumous history of Poe is the fact that his influence in France, on and through the intermediary of three great French poets, has been immense; and that his influence in America and in England has been negligible. I cannot think of any good poet, here or in England, who has been sensibly influenced by Poe – except perhaps Edward Lear.[21] How is it that Poe can be chosen as a distinctively American author, when there is so little evidence that any American poet since Poe has written any differently than he would have written if Poe had never lived?

To Walt Whitman, on the other hand, a great influence on modern poetry has been attributed. I wonder if this has not been exaggerated. In this respect he reminds me of Gerard Manley Hopkins – a lesser poet than Whitman,

but also a remarkable innovator in style. Whitman and Hopkins, I think, both found an idiom and a metric perfectly suited for what they had to say; and very doubtfully adaptable to what anyone else has to say. One reason why such writers as Whitman and Hopkins attract imitators, is that in their less inspired verse they tend – as a writer with a highly idiosyncratic idiom may be tempted to do – to imitate themselves; and it is a man's imitation of himself, rather than his best work, that is most catching and most easily imitated. A true disciple is impressed by what his master has to say, and *consequently* by his way of saying it; an imitator – I might say, a borrower – is impressed chiefly by the way the master said it. If he manages to mimic his master well enough, he may succeed even in disguising from himself the fact that he has nothing to say.

It is possible, on the other hand, that the influence of Mark Twain may prove to have been considerable. If so, it is for this reason: that Twain, at least in *Huckleberry Finn*, reveals himself to be one of those writers, of whom there are not a great many in any literature, who have discovered a new way of writing, valid not only for themselves but for others. I should place him, in this respect, even with Dryden and Swift, as one of those rare writers who have brought their language up to date, and in so doing, "purified the dialect of the tribe."[22] In this respect I should put him above Hawthorne: though no finer a stylist, and in obvious ways a less profound explorer of the human soul. Superficially, Twain is equally local, strongly local. Yet the Salem of Hawthorne remains a town with a particular tradition, which could not be anywhere but where it is; whereas the Mississippi of Mark Twain is not only the river known to those who voyage on it or live beside it, but the universal river of human life – more universal, indeed, than the Congo of Joseph Conrad. For Twain's readers anywhere, the Mississippi is *the* river. There is in Twain, I think, a great unconscious depth, which gives to *Huckleberry Finn* this symbolic value: a symbolism all the more powerful for being uncalculated and unconscious.

Here we arrive at two characteristics which I think must be found together, in any author whom I should single out as one of the landmarks of a national literature: the strong local flavour combined with unconscious universality.[23] We must not suppose that the former can be always identified on superficial examination. What is identifiably local about Poe? Apart from *The Gold Bug* and a few other prose pieces, there is little in the work of Poe that appears to be based on the landscapes and the types of human being that he knew. His favourite settings are imaginary romantic places: a Paris or a Venice

which he had never visited. It is very puzzling; but then Poe remains an enigma, a stumbling-block for the critic. Perhaps Poe's local quality is due simply to the fact that he never had the opportunity to travel, and that when he wrote about Europe, it was a Europe with which he had no direct acquaintance.[24] A cosmopolitan experience might have done Poe more harm than good; for cosmopolitanism can be the enemy of universality – it may dissipate attention in superficial familiarity with the streets, the cafés and some of the local dialect of a number of foreign capitals; whereas universality can never come except through writing about what one knows thoroughly. Dostoevski is none the less universal, for having stopped in Russia. Perhaps all that one can say of Poe is that his was a type of imagination that created its own dream world; that anyone's dream world is conditioned by the world in which he lives; and that the real world behind Poe's fancy was the world of the Baltimore and Richmond and Philadelphia that he knew.[25]

You will have noticed that the three authors on whom I am concentrating my attention are three of those who have enjoyed the greatest reputation abroad. It is possible for foreigners to be mistaken about contemporary writers: I know that the contemporary English estimate of the importance of some French writer, or the contemporary French estimate of the importance of some English writer, can be grotesque. But I think that when enough time has elapsed the continued appreciation of foreigners is likely to indicate that an author does combine the local with the universal. The foreigner may at first be attracted by the differences: an author is found interesting because he is so unlike anything in the foreigner's own literature. But a vogue due to novel differences will soon fade out; it will not survive unless the foreign reader recognises, perhaps unconsciously, identity as well as difference. When we read a novel of Dostoevski, or see a play by Tchehov, for the first time, I think that we are fascinated by the odd way in which Russians behave; later, we come to recognise that theirs is merely an odd way of expressing thoughts and feelings which we all share. And, though it is only too easy for a writer to be local without being universal, I doubt whether a poet or novelist can be universal without being local too. Who could be more Greek than Odysseus? Or more German than Faust? Or more Spanish than Don Quixote? Or more American than Huck Finn?[26] Yet each one of them is a kind of archetype in the mythology of all men everywhere.

Having got to this point, let me now suggest that a national literature comes to consciousness at the stage at which any young writer must be aware of several generations of writers behind him, in his own country and

language, and amongst these generations several writers generally acknowledged to be of the great. The importance of this background for the young writer is incalculable. It is not necessary that this background should provide him with models for imitation. The young writer, certainly, should not be consciously bending his talent to conform to any supposed American or other tradition. The writers of the past, especially of the immediate past, in one's own place and language may be valuable to the young writer simply as something definite to rebel against. He will recognise the common ancestry: but he needn't necessarily *like* his relatives. For models to imitate, or for styles from which to learn, he may often more profitably go to writers of another country and another language, or of a remoter age. Some of my strongest impulse to original development, in early years, has come from thinking: "here is a man who has said something, long ago or in another language, which somehow corresponds to what I want to say now; let me see if I can't do what he has done, in my own language – in the language of my own place and time."

Such considerations should put us all on guard against an attitude of narrow national pride in our literature. Especially against asking questions such as "is this new writer truly American or not? Does his work conform to the standards of America, to our definitions of what constitutes Americanism in literature?" It is obvious that such a critical censorship could only stifle originality. The cry has so often been raised about new writers: "This isn't English!" or "this isn't French!" or whatever the language may be. Also, there is always the danger of overvaluing the local product just because it is local; and of unconsciously judging our own writers by less exacting standards than those we apply to writers of other nations. We are, in every country, always exposed to that danger. And to narrow your admission to subject matter or to style already accepted, would be to affirm that what is American has been settled once for all. A living literature is always in process of change; contemporaneous living literatures are always, through one or more authors, changing each other; and the literature written in America in future generations will, you may be sure, render obsolete any formulations of "what is American" based on the work of writers up to and including those now writing.

From time to time there occurs some revolution, or sudden mutation of form and content in literature. Then, some way of writing which has been practised for a generation or more, is found by a few people to be out of date, and no longer to respond to contemporary modes of thought, feeling and

speech. A new kind of writing appears, to be greeted at first with disdain and derision; we hear that the tradition has been flouted, and that chaos has come. After a time it appears that the new way of writing is not destructive but re-creative. It is not that we have repudiated the past, as the obstinate enemies – and also the stupidest supporters – of any new movement like to believe; but that we have enlarged our conception of the past; and that in the light of what is new we see the past in a new pattern.[27] We might now consider such a revolution as that which has taken place in poetry, both in England and in America, during the last forty years.

In talking about such an event, one must mention names. So, in order to be quite fair, I explain that I choose names as typical illustrations, that the poets mentioned are not necessarily valued in the order in which their names will occur, and that they are not all necessarily superior to all of the poets who are not mentioned. Furthermore, in any such literary revolution there is an overlap: some of the poets who continue to write in what is usually called a "more traditional" manner are first-rate in their kind, and by the verdict of history may prove to be more highly prized than many of the poets who have written in newer ways.

In the first decade of the century the situation was unusual. I cannot think of a single living poet, in either England or America, then at the height of his powers, whose work was capable of pointing the way to a young poet conscious of the desire for a new idiom. It was the tail-end of the Victorian era. Our sympathies, I think, went out to those who are known as the English poets of the nineties, who were all, with one exception, dead. The exception was W. B. Yeats, who was younger, more robust, and of more temperate habits than the poets of the Rhymers' Club with whom he had associated in his youth.[28] And Yeats himself had not found his personal speech; he was a late developer; when he emerged as a great modern poet, about 1917, we had already reached a point such that he appeared not as a precursor but as an elder and venerated contemporary.[29] What the poets of the nineties had bequeathed to us besides the new tone of a few poems by Ernest Dowson, John Davidson and Arthur Symons, was the assurance that there was something to be learned from the French poets of the Symbolist Movement – and most of them were dead, too.

I do not propose to define the change that came about; I am merely tracing its course. Such a transformation as we have experienced in this century cannot be altogether attributed to one group of poets, still less to one individual. As so often happens in the fields of science, when a new discovery is

made, it has been preceded by a number of scattered investigators who have happened to be groping, each at first in ignorance of the efforts of the others, in the same direction. In retrospect, it is often impossible to attribute the discovery to the genius of one scientist alone. The *point de repère*[30] usually and conveniently taken, as the starting-point of modern poetry, is the group denominated "imagists" in London about 1910. I was not there. It was an Anglo-American group: literary history has not settled the question, and perhaps never will, whether imagism itself, or the name for it, was invented by the American Ezra Pound or the Englishman T. E. Hulme. The poets in the group seem to have been drawn together by a common attraction towards modern poetry in French, and a common interest in exploring the possibilities of development through study of the poetry of other ages and languages. If imagism became more quickly and widely known in America than in England, that was largely because of the zealous, though sometimes misguided activity of Amy Lowell, who assumed the role of Advertising Manager for a movement which, on the whole, is chiefly important because of the stimulus it gave to later developments.[31]

I think it is just to say that the pioneers of twentieth century poetry were more conspicuously the Americans than the English, both in number and in quality. Why this should have been must remain a matter for conjecture. I do not believe that it is attributable to the fact that so many more Britons were killed in the first war: the most remarkable of the British poets killed in that war whose work has been published, is in my opinion, Isaac Rosenberg, who was outside the movement. Perhaps the young Americans of that age were less oppressed by the weight of the Victorian tradition, more open to new influences and more ready for experiment. (So far as my observation goes, I should say in general, of contemporary verse, that the most dangerous tendency of American versifiers is towards eccentricity and formlessness, whereas that of English versifiers is rather towards conventionality and reversion to the Victorian type.) But, looking at my own generation, the names that come immediately to mind are those of Ezra Pound, W. C. Williams, Wallace Stevens[32] – and you may take pride in one who is a St. Louisan by birth: Miss Marianne Moore. Even of a somewhat younger generation, the names of Americans come to my mind most readily: Cummings, Hart Crane, Ransom, Tate.[33] And I am choosing names only from among those whose work places them among the more radical experimenters: among poets of an intermediate type of technique the names of distinction are as numerous here as in England. And this is a new thing. In

the nineteenth century, Poe and Whitman stand out as solitary international figures: in the last forty years, for the first time, there has been assembled a *body* of American poetry which has made its total impression in England and in Europe.

I am merely stating what seem to me cold facts. During the thirties the tide seemed to be turning the other way: the representative figure of that decade is W. H. Auden, though there are other British poets of the same generation whose best work will I believe prove equally permanent. Now, I do not know whether Auden is to be considered as an English or as an American poet: his career has been useful to me in providing me with an answer to the same question when asked about myself, for I can say: "whichever Auden is, I suppose I must be the other." To-day there are several interesting younger poets in both countries, and England has acquired some valuable recruits from Wales. But my point in making this hurried review is simply this. In my time, there have been influences in both directions, and I think, to the mutual profit of literature on both sides of the Atlantic. But English and American poetry do not in consequence tend to become merged into one common international type, even though the poetry of to-day on one side of the ocean may show a closer kinship with poetry on the other side, than either does with that of an earlier generation. I do not think that a satisfactory statement of what constitutes the difference between an English and an American "tradition" in poetry could be arrived at: because the moment you produce your definition, and the neater the definition is, the more surely some poet will turn up who doesn't fit into it at all, but who is nevertheless definitely either English or American. And the tradition itself, as I have said long ago, is altered by every new writer of genius.[34] The difference will remain undefined, but it will remain; and this is I think as it should be: for it is because they are different that English poetry and American poetry can help each other, and contribute towards the endless renovation of both.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Subtitled "An Address Delivered at Washington University on June 9, 1953." On 19 Dec 1952 Guy Adams Cardwell (1905-2005), an expert on Mark Twain and professor of English at Washington University in St. Louis (1949-68), sent TSE a draft of the program for the university's centennial celebration, which included details of TSE's lecture and the honorary degree ceremony at commencement the next day. After Cardwell requested early submission for university

publication and autographing, TSE wrote on 6 May 1953 that he had airmailed the script and hoped that it had arrived in time.

The address, delivered in Graham Chapel before an audience of 800, was published as part of "Washington University Studies – New Series – Language and Literature – No. 23"; the text was accompanied by an appendix "The Eliot Family and St. Louis" (27-46) prepared by the English Department. On 11 June, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* published a group photograph of TSE with fifteen name-identified relatives who attended the ceremonies (4D). The address itself was reprinted posthumously in *To Criticize the Critic* (1965). The TS of the address, marked "Script used," is in King's (K11); the TS and CC of the version revised for publication are in King's (H11j).

2. TSE attended Smith Academy from 1898 to 1905 and recited the poem at Memorial Hall on 13 June 1905. It was printed as "[At Graduation 1905]" in *Poems Written in Early Youth* (1950) (*CPP* 592-95) and as "To the Class of 1905" in *Poems1*, 227-30 following the title given in a printed program held at Washington University.

3. TSE's grandfather William Greenleaf Eliot established the first Unitarian church in St. Louis in 1834, and he founded Washington University in 1853 and Smith Academy, a boys' school, in 1854; he served as president of the university's first board of trustees and resigned his pastorate to become chancellor in 1871.

4. Smith Academy closed in June 1917. TSE wrote to John Hayward on 19 Aug 1943 sending him the copy of his graduation poem: "I hope you will be impressed by the pathos of the hopes which I expressed for the twentieth century and for the future of a day school which was dissolved through lack of pupils a few years later" (quoted in *Poems1*, 1071).

5. Edward Fisher Jackson (born ca. 1862), a graduate of Washington University, taught Latin and history; Edwin Loomis Robinson (born 1870), a graduate of Yale University, taught Greek and history; Wallis Gibson Rowe (born 1867), a graduate of Yale University, taught mathematics; Julia Jouvet-Kaufmann (1846-1921) also taught French at Washington University; Anna Hamilton Chandler taught German; Roger Conant Hatch (1878-1943), a graduate of Harvard University, taught English and elocution and "conceived great hopes of a literary career for me," as TSE wrote to John Hayward on 19 Aug 1943; Frank Mason Jeffrey (1874-1943), a graduate of Yale University, taught history. Alfred Munson Butler and Charles Clinton Woodside, both graduates of Harvard University, taught physics in the academic years 1903-04 and 1904-05, respectively.

6. The American lexicographer David B. Guralnik (1920-2000) edited with Joseph H. Friend *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*, first published in 1951. Guralnik discussed the process of compiling the dictionary in his pamphlet *The Making of a New Dictionary: A Paper Read before The Rowfant Club, November 30, 1951* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, [1953]).

7. The American writer and lexicographer Noah Webster (1758-1843) married Rebecca Greenleaf (1766-1847) in 1789. Rebecca Greenleaf was the sister of Elizabeth Greenleaf (1750-1841), grandmother to William Greenleaf Eliot; Rebecca was therefore TSE's grandfather's great-aunt. Guralnik discusses the importance of Webster's contribution to American lexicography through his *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828) on pp. 8-9 of his pamphlet.

8. In his will, Shaw bequeathed a considerable part of his estate to support the creation of a new English phonemic alphabet.

9. On 27 Feb 1953, the British House of Commons approved the Simplified Spelling Bill for consideration by parliament. The bill proposed to examine the possibility of teaching small children a simplified spelling system before they were introduced to standard English. It was the second attempt to reform English spelling by the MP for Loughborough, Dr. Mont Follick, who withdrew the bill in May in the face of opposition from the Ministry of Education.

10. In *The Big Con: The Story of the Confidence Man and the Confidence Game* (Indianapolis, New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1940), David W. Maurer assembled the material for his book from interviews, letters, and conversations with hundreds of criminals and grifters. The penultimate chapter is entitled "The Con Man and his Lingo" (269-96).

11. Guralnik writes: "We also planned to enter with a fullness hitherto unknown colloquialisms and slang, the informal and vulgate words that are so rich and characteristic a feature of American English. Thus, in addition to the well-established entries, such as *dead beat*, *double cross*, *flophouse*, *sob sister*, and *vamp*, we would include a large number of widely used terms that had been overlooked by our predecessors, such as *fungo*, *cover girl*, *jerk*, *double take*, *big time*, *Hooper rating*, *sixty-four dollar question*, and *cousin*" (13).

12. "Whenever such a new term gave indication, in the judgment of the editors, of probable longevity, it was added to our master list. Of course, we were sometimes caught short. Some words that seemed to have a good foothold in the language faded away gently like the ephemerids. In 1946, for example, *hubba hubba* seemed an interjection with a fine life expectancy. We entered it as 'an exclamation of pleasure, surprise, encouragement, etc.' and as a slang noun meaning 'an attractive girl or woman.' Although the objects inspiring such shouts of approval have decidedly not disappeared from the American scene, the word itself has died a quiet death, and we are stuck with it for future historians, perhaps, to ponder in bemused wonder" (18-19).

13. The cable in question has not been preserved. As Cardwell was away lecturing elsewhere and unable to attend TSE's address, he may have sent the cable prior to the lecture in St. Louis; TSE may have read from it and then misplaced it.

14. In *The American Language: An Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States* (1919), H. L. Mencken, whom TSE met in 1933 (*Lo* 557), elucidates the differences between British and American English and investigates how American started to deviate from British English. The section "Specimens of the American Vulgate" contains "The Declaration of Independence in American," which is translated into everyday American slang.

In "Tradition and the Practice of Poetry" (1936), TSE argued: "Historical parallels arouse suspicion if they are too neat. It is this parallel with the Latin language, I think, which has led people in America like Mr. Mencken to talk of 'the American language' as if it were something that were bound to develop as far from English as modern French is from classical Latin" (5.304).

15. The American pilot and inventor Charles Augustus Lindbergh (1902-74) became world famous when, on 20-21 May 1927, he flew in the single-engine monoplane the *Spirit of St. Louis* from Long Island, New York, to Le Bourget Field in Paris.

16. An article in the *Times* of 7 Apr 1953, entitled "Rare Bird Visitors to Lundy / Red-Headed Bunting and American Robin," reported that "four extremely rare visitors were among the 129 species of birds which, as recorded in the sixth annual report of the Lundy Field Society, were noted on Lundy Island during 1952." One of them was "the American robin – which is not a robin, but a species of thrush, *Turdus migratorius*. An example of this bird, a first-winter male, was on Lundy from October 25 to 29, and there can be no doubt of the identification since it was

trapped, carefully examined, and photographed before release. . . . Of the Lundy specimen, however, the report states that it 'arrived during a period of strong westerly weather in which several other American species were recorded in the British Isles'" (8).

TSE had a lifelong interest in birds, as attested by the early letter to his father of 23-24 June 1898 ("Charlotte and I hunt for birds," *L1* 1), and his copy of the sixth edition of Frank M. Chapman's *Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1902), with a note in his hand, saying, "A much coveted birthday present on my 14th birthday. T. S. Eliot. 18 June 1928" (King's).

17. The American preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703-58) is best known for his sermon *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (1741).

18. Washington Irving (1783-1859), American writer and historian, author of the collection of short stories *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819-20). The Leatherstocking Tales (1823-41) is a series of five novels by James Fenimore Cooper recounting the adventures of Natty Bumppo, the son of white parents raised by Native Americans. These two works by Irving and Cooper were the first American books to have found success in Britain and the rest of Europe.

19. Chapter 5 of D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923) is devoted to "Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Novels." In "American Critics" (1929), TSE had similarly praised "Mr. D. H. Lawrence's dashing series of essays. Mr. Lawrence's essay on Fenimore Cooper is the best thing ever written on Cooper" (3.569-70).

20. TSE wrote to E. R. Curtius on 13 Mar 1946: "I also admit to a natural tendency to Jansenism which no doubt is partly individual temperament and partly the reflex of a strong element of Calvinism on both sides of my family in the seventeenth century, but it does seem to me that I have kept on moving, although perhaps at a very slow pace" (Bonn). He also stated in his "Notes for speech at the University of Rennes" (1952): "Et au dixseptième, une autre ressemblance: la Nouv. Angl. hébergeant aussi bon nombre de sorcieres – que mon aieul s'est mis immédiatement à exterminer." *Trans*: And in the seventeenth [century], another similarity: New England providing shelter also to a great number of witches whom my ancestor started to exterminate immediately (7.725, 727).

21. In *From Poe to Valéry* (1948), TSE identified these three French writers as Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Valéry. He also asked: "Can we point to any poet whose style appears to have been formed by a study of Poe? The only one whose name immediately suggests itself is – Edward Lear" (7.290).

22. See *Little Gidding*: "Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us / To purify the dialect of the tribe" (*CPP* 194 / *Poems1* 205). TSE claimed in his 1950 introduction to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: "Repeated readings of the book only confirm and deepen one's admiration of the consistency and perfect adaptation of the writing. This is a style which at the period, whether in America or in England, was an innovation, a new discovery in the English language" (7.503).

23. TSE had made a similar comment on Dante's language in 1929: "Some of the character of this universal language seems to me to inhere in Dante's Florentine speech; and the localization ('Florentine' speech) seems if anything to emphasize the universality, because it cuts across the modern division of nationality" (3.701-02).

24. "The Gold-Bug" is a short detective story that appeared in 1843. In *From Poe to Valéry*, TSE defined Poe as "a kind of displaced European; he is attracted to Paris, to Italy and to Spain,

to places which he could endow with romantic gloom and grandeur. . . . There can be few authors of such eminence who have drawn so little from their own roots, who have been so isolated from any surroundings" (7.292).

25. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, Poe became an orphan at an early age when his mother died soon after his father left the family. He was looked after by a couple from Richmond, Virginia, John and Frances Allan, and later lived in many cities, among them New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

26. TSE wrote in his introduction to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: "So we come to see Huck himself in the end as one of the permanent symbolic figures of fiction; not unworthy to take a place with Ulysses, Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Hamlet and other great discoveries that man has made about himself" (7.502).

27. TSE is summarizing some of the notions first expressed in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), where he wrote that "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" (2.106-07).

28. The Rhymers' Club, a circle of poets living in London established in 1890 by Yeats and Ernest Rhys, included Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Francis Thompson, John Davidson, and Arthur Symons.

29. At the beginning of "Ezra Pound" (1946), TSE similarly recalled: "Undergraduates at Harvard in my time read the English poets of the '90s who were dead . . . Yeats was well known, of course; but to me, at least, Yeats did not appear, until after 1917, to be anything but a minor survivor of the '90s . . . thereafter one saw Yeats rather as a more eminent contemporary than an elder from whom one could learn" (6.759).

30. *point de repère*: point of reference, landmark

31. Amy Lowell's vigorous promotion of Imagism helped establish the popularity of free verse in America. TSE wrote in "Ezra Pound" that "the work she did, in putting over American poetry upon an American public, was on a lower level. She was a kind of demon saleswoman; and unless my memory of her methods is at fault . . . they were more enthusiastic than critical" (6.762). TSE had reviewed Lowell's *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* unfavorably in 1918, objecting to its "all-American propaganda" and describing the poets she focuses on as the "victims of Miss Lowell's enthusiasm" (1.696).

32. American poets William Carlos Williams (1883-1963) and Wallace Stevens (1879-1955). In Feb 1953, Faber published Stevens's *Selected Poems*, and the following year TSE wrote a tribute on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday (8.20).

33. When the American modernist poet Hart Crane (1899-1932), author of *White Buildings* (1926) and *The Bridge* (1930), died at the age of thirty-two, TSE expressed his regret to Crane's mother "at the death of a poet, much of whose work I admired very much. There are very few living poets in America of equal interest to me" (*Lo* 336). Crane's poem "The Tunnel" had appeared in the *Criterion* of Nov 1927. The American poet and critic John Crowe Ransom (1888-1974), member of the Southern "Fugitive" group with Allen Tate, was the first editor of the *Kenyon Review*.

34. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent," TSE wrote: "what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them" (2.106).

Gratulation[1]

A tribute to Rudolf Kassner

To contribute to the chorus of praise and thanks which should greet Rudolf Kassner on his eightieth birthday, is a privilege which confers greater honour on the contributor than on the recipient.[2] I am happy to have the opportunity on this occasion to salute and pay homage to so distinguished an author and so great a European who has every reason to look back with pride upon his life-work.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. As printed in *Rudolf Kassner zum achtzigsten Geburtstag. Gedenkbuch*, eds. A. Cl. Kensik and D. Bodmer. Erlenbach-Zürich: Eugen Rentsch Verlag, 1953. Pp. 250; 58. The Festschrift was published on 9 Sept.

2. On 27 May 1953, TSE replied to a letter from the Swiss publishing house Eugen Rentsch Verlag inviting him to contribute to the Festschrift: "I am sorry that I have been unable to do more than the following letter, but I have been extremely busy for the last two months, and I am on the eve of departure for a very busy visit to America. So you will forgive me, I hope, if I only let you have a few words."

The Austrian philosopher Rudolf Kassner (1873-1959) turned eighty on 11 Sept 1953. TSE wrote to Marguerite Caetani on 21 Jan 1930: "I have some volumes of Kassner by me and will look through them. I hope he may get the Nobel Prize, though I don't think that makes very much impression on Anglo-Saxon readers: it has gone too often to obscure Scandinavians" (*L5* 50). Later that year, Kassner's essay "Concerning Vanity" appeared in the *Criterion* of Oct 1930.

Literature [The Unity of European Literature][1]

We can approach the question of the unity of European literature from two different points of view. It is from the historian of literature that we learn the meaning of the phrase "unity of European literature" in the *past*. Or, we may start from the point of view of the contemporary man of letters, whose centre of interest is the literature of the *present and immediate future*. My own starting point is the latter: I speak, not as a scholar, but simply as a man of letters. As a writer, I recognise my own immense debt to other authors not only of my own language but of other European languages, ancient and modern. I am aware that but for what I have learned from poets and prose-writers of other languages than my own, I might never have had anything to say, and certainly should never have found out how to say it; and I have, throughout my life, tried to keep in touch with what was happening, in the world of letters, in other countries of Europe. For seventeen years I edited a literary review, whose main *raison d'être* was to stimulate the circulation of ideas, to arouse attention to whatever new and significant, in poetry and prose, was coming into existence in other countries as well as my own.[2] To me, the unity of European literature has always seemed a self-evident *necessity*: to me, the rapid circulation throughout Europe of the best that was being thought and written in each country of Europe has seemed as essential for the continued life of literature as is the function of breathing for the life of a human being.

I point the difference between these two lines of approach – that of the scholar and that of the man of letters – only to affirm that they are *complementary*. It is from the study of history that we learn what we are now: by learning *how* we have come to be what we are, we acquire understanding of *what* we are. And I find that my own faith in the unity of European literature, derived from experience, is confirmed by what I have learnt from scholars about the history of European literature from its earliest beginnings. I refer you to a great and monumental book, by Professor Ernst Robert Curtius of Bonn: *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* – a book which ought to be perused by every European man of letters. Dr. Curtius, indeed, is both scholar and in my sense "man of letters"; he has made important contributions to the literary criticism of our time, and to the criticism of

modern French and English authors in particular.[3] He brings the light of his organised learning to bear on our situation today. I am happy to find that the conclusions to which he is led, are in accord with those which I have held instinctively or reached empirically.

Obviously, if the unity of European literature were merely an historical fact with no bearing upon the future, it would be of only limited interest. But the unity in the past is the strongest reason for believing that unity is necessary in the future. If, that is, our several literatures are to survive – if we are to hope, in any country of Europe, to continue to produce imaginative and philosophical work of the first order. Dr. Curtius holds that the literature of Europe can be understood only if considered as a whole, from Homer to Goethe.[4] I agree: and I would add that for the future, European literature must continue to exist as one organism, if literature is to be written in any of the countries which constitute Europe.

When I say that the literature of Europe is an organic whole, I am not dissimulating, but rather emphasising, the differences between the literature of one country and that of another. It is because of these varieties of region and language, and the divergent paths of development, as well as because of more primitive differences between the Nordic, Celtic, Latin and Slavonic languages, that there is *significant* unity – unity, not uniformity. And the testimony of mediaeval scholars like Professor Curtius is supported by all that we know of later periods. Sometimes one country, sometimes another, has taken the lead: at one time or another, powerful influences have swept Europe coming from Italy, Spain, France, England or Germany in turn. And what modern writer has not been deeply affected by the work of the great Russian novelists? I have mentioned only the larger nations of Europe; but we must not forget that a single man of genius in one of the smaller nations, from time to time, has exercised immense power over minds everywhere. Such, in our own time, have been Kierkegaard in Denmark, and Ibsen in Norway. I am sure, for my own part, that dramatic literature will always be something different from whatever it might have been, if Ibsen had never appeared.[5]

There is another way of stating the reason for our unity in the past, and I trust, in the present, which should have an immediate appeal. We do not need to consult the works of historians of literature, to know that the literature of every country of Europe has been nourished from the same three sources: the literature of the Bible, and the literatures of the Greeks and

Romans. We have origins in Israel, Greece and Rome. These literatures are the common heritage of Gentile and Jew, Catholic and Protestant. I am not speaking of the common religious formation: I am speaking of the *poetry* of the Old and the New Testament and the Apocrypha, and of the *poetry* of Greece and Rome: for, apart from sharing a common religion, it is by sharing the poetry of great civilisations of the past that a common sensibility is formed. Theodor Haecker gave to his masterly essay on Virgil a significant title: *Vergil Vater des Abendlandes*.[6] For many centuries, we have all been indebted to these three sources of our own poetry. For many centuries, our poets have been educated by Israel, Greece and Rome. Without these literatures we should become unable to understand, not only the great literature of other languages, but the great literature of our own.

Every literature, if it is to thrive, needs constant refreshment from two sources: from its own past, and from contemporary writing abroad, as well as from the classics of foreign literatures. I do not ignore the value of literary influences from the other side of the world: I myself owe much to ancient India, and other writers have enriched literature by seeking inspiration still further afield, from Persia, China, Japan, and even from less highly developed societies. But because of our inextricable common history, and because of our closer cultural kinship, Europeans must continue to owe their largest debts to each other, and to those three ancient civilisations of which we are all the heirs.

Finally, I ask two questions: Is this unity threatened today? And, why should it be worth preserving? First, it is threatened by immoderate censorship and direction: most, when men of letters are told, not only what they may not say, but also what they *must* say. Second, it is threatened by modern and erroneous conceptions of the Nature of Man – what we call ideologies. And finally, it is threatened by ignorance – by increasing indifference to the humanist element in education, the element that (religion excepted) most helps to bind us together. As for why it is worth preserving, my answer is one that you may have anticipated. The health of the literature of each language of Europe depends upon that of the others. If, through the laceration of civil war, from oppression or control by a government, or from some more obscure cause, the literature of any one area of Europe languishes, so much the worse for the rest of Europe. If there were no such thing as European literature, there would be no French or German or English or any other local literature within Europe. In losing our kinsmen, we should

find ourselves severed also from our ancestors, and from our own literatures that patriotism holds dear. So, if you think it desirable that your own country should continue to produce great works of literature, and that it should continue to appreciate its writers of the past, you must agree that we all have a common interest at stake.

NOTES

1. As printed in *The Unity of European Culture: A Series of Broadcasts Given over the B.B.C. Foreign Service July to October 1953*. [London: British Broadcasting Corporation], 1953. Pp. 23, [1]; 19-21.

On 21 July 1953, TSE replied to the invitation by Richard Law, MP for Kingston upon Hull, Haltemprice, to give a talk for a BBC broadcast series titled "The Unity of European Culture" with two questions: "The first is, by what date would you want a ten minutes text from myself? The second is, what am I to talk about? I suppose that my subject would be the 'Unity of European Literature,' or something like that. One further difficulty I feel is that I seem to have said all I have to say on the subject in a series of talks delivered in German on the German Service in 1946, a series which has been separately published in Germany, and also published as an appendix to both the English and German editions of my book, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*." A persistent Law did not demur when TSE dutifully offered October as a possibility. His untitled broadcast, editorially titled "Literature / *talk by* / T. S. Eliot" (19), was the sixth in the BBC series. Recorded on 12 Oct 1953 and broadcast on the European Service on 13 Oct, it was published in wrappers in Dec 1953 and rebroadcast on 2 Feb 1954 for the Third Programme.

2. TSE edited the *Criterion* from 1922 to 1939.

3. E. R. Curtius sent TSE a copy of *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (1948), a comprehensive study of medieval Latin literature and its relationship with antiquity and the modern period, which TSE defined as a "magnificent book" in his letter to Curtius of 14 Feb 1949 (Bonn). He also admired Curtius's *Die literarischen Wegbereiter des neuen Frankreichs* (1919) and printed his studies on Balzac and Proust in the *Criterion* of Jan 1923 and Apr 1924, respectively.

4. "Die europäische Literatur ist der europäischen Kultur zeitlich koextensiv, umfaßt also einen Zeitraum von etwa sechsundzwanzig Jahrhunderten (von Homer bis Goethe gerechnet)." *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern: A. Francke, 1948), 20. *Trans*: "European literature is coextensive in time with European culture, therefore embraces a period of some twenty-six centuries (reckoning from Homer to Goethe)." *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1953), 12.

5. In the early 1930s, TSE had sought to publish a translation of a selection from the works of Kierkegaard, but the project did not materialize. He wrote to T. F. Burns on 11 July 1932 that "no one of us knows anything whatever about Kierkegaard beyond his reputation" (*Lo* 350). TSE owned a copy of Theodor Haecker's *Sören Kierkegaard und die Philosophie der Innerlichkeit* (Munich: Schreiber, 1913). He pointed out in "Poetry and Drama" that the great prose dramatists Ibsen and Chekhov "have at times done things of which I would not otherwise have supposed

prose to be capable, but who seem to me, in spite of their success, to have been hampered in expression by writing in prose" (7.603).

6. Haecker's *Vergil: Vater des Abendlandes* (1931) was translated as *Virgil, Father of the West* by Arthur Wesley Wheen (1934). TSE referred to this book in "Virgil and the Christian World" (1951) (7.629).

The Three Voices of Poetry[1]

The first voice is the voice of the poet talking to himself – or to nobody. The second is the voice of the poet addressing an audience, whether large or small. The third is the voice of the poet when he attempts to create a dramatic character speaking in verse; when he is saying, not what he would say in his own person, but only what he can say within the limits of one imaginary character addressing another imaginary character. The distinction between the first and the second voice, between the poet speaking to himself and the poet speaking to other people, points to the problem of poetic communication; the distinction between the poet addressing other people in either his own voice or an assumed voice, and the poet inventing speech in which imaginary characters address each other, points to the problem of the difference between dramatic, quasi-dramatic, and non-dramatic verse.

I wish to anticipate a question that some of you may well raise. Cannot a poem be written for the ear, or for the eye, of one person alone? You may say simply, "Isn't love poetry at times a form of communication between one person and one other, with no thought of a further audience?"

There are at least two people who might have disagreed with me on this point:[2†] Mr. and Mrs. Robert Browning. In the poem "One Word More," written as an epilogue to *Men and Women*, and addressed to Mrs. Browning, the husband makes a striking value judgment:

> Rafael made a century of sonnets,
> Made and wrote them in a certain volume,
> Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
> Else he only used to draw Madonnas:
> These, the world might view – but one, the volume.
> Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs you . . .
> You and I would rather read that volume . . .
> Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas . . .
>
> Dante once prepared to paint an angel:
> Whom to please? You whisper "Beatrice" . . .
> You and I would rather see that angel,
> Painted by the tenderness of Dante,
> Would we not? – than read a fresh Inferno.[3]

I agree that one *Inferno*, even by Dante, is enough; and perhaps we need not too much regret the fact that Rafael did not multiply his Madonnas:[4†] but I can only say that I feel no curiosity whatever about Rafael's sonnets or Dante's angel.[5] If Rafael wrote, or Dante painted, for the eyes of one person alone, let their privacy be respected. We know that Mr. and Mrs. Browning liked to write poems to each other, because they published them, and some of them are good poems. We know that Rossetti thought that he was writing his "House of Life" sonnets for one person, and that he was only persuaded by his friends to disinter them.[6] Now, I do not deny that a poem may be addressed to one person: there is a well-known form, not always amatory in content, called The Epistle. We shall never have conclusive evidence: for the testimony of poets as to what they thought they were doing when they wrote a poem, cannot be taken altogether at its face value. But my opinion is, that a good love poem, though it may be addressed to one person, is always meant to be overheard by other people. Surely, the proper language of love – that is, of communication to the beloved and to no one else – is prose.

Having dismissed as an illusion the voice of the poet talking to one person only, I think that the best way for me to try to make my three voices audible,[7†] is to trace the genesis of the distinction in my own mind. The writer to whose mind the distinction is most likely to occur is probably the writer like myself, who has spent a good many years in writing poetry, before attempting to write for the stage at all. It may be, as I have read, that there is a dramatic element in much of my early work. It may be that from the beginning I aspired unconsciously to the theatre – or, unfriendly critics might say, to Shaftesbury Avenue and Broadway.[8†] I have, however, gradually come to the conclusion that in writing verse for the stage both the process and the outcome are very different from what they are in writing verse to be read or recited. Twenty years ago I was commissioned to write a pageant play to be called *The Rock*. The invitation to write the words for this spectacle – the occasion of which was an appeal for funds for church-building in new housing areas – came at a moment when I seemed to myself to have exhausted my meagre poetic gifts, and to have nothing more to say.[9] To be, at such a moment, commissioned to write something which, good or bad, must be delivered by a certain date, may have the effect that vigorous cranking sometimes has upon a motor car when the battery is run down. The task was clearly laid out: I had only to write the words of prose dialogue for scenes of the usual historical pageant pattern, for which I had been

given a scenario. I had also to provide a number of choral passages in verse, the content of which was left to my own devices: except for the reasonable stipulation that all the choruses were expected to have some relevance to the purpose of the pageant, and that each chorus was to occupy a precise number of minutes of stage time. But in carrying out this second part of my task,[10†] there was nothing to call my attention to the third, or dramatic voice: it was the second voice, that of myself addressing – indeed haranguing – an audience, that was most distinctly audible. Apart from the obvious fact that writing to order is not the same thing as writing to please oneself, I learnt only that verse to be spoken by a choir should be different from verse to be spoken by one person; and that the more voices you have in your choir, the simpler and more direct the vocabulary, the syntax, and the content of your lines must be. This chorus of *The Rock* was not a dramatic voice; though many lines were distributed, the personages were unindividuated. Its members were speaking *for me*, not uttering words that really represented any supposed character of their own.

The chorus in *Murder in the Cathedral* does, I think, represent some advance in dramatic development: that is to say, I set myself the task of writing lines, not for an anonymous chorus, but for a chorus of women of Canterbury – one might almost say, charwomen of Canterbury.[11†] I had to make some effort to identify myself with these women, instead of merely identifying them with myself. But as for the dialogue of the play, the plot had the drawback (from the point of view of my own dramatic education) of presenting only one dominant character; and what dramatic conflict there is takes place within the mind of that character. The third, or dramatic voice, did not make itself audible to me until I first attacked the problem of presenting two (or more) characters, in some sort of conflict, misunderstanding, or attempt to understand each other, characters with each of whom I had to try to identify myself while writing the words for him or her to speak. You may remember that Mrs. Cluppins, in the trial of the case of Bardell *v*. Pickwick, testified that "the voices was very loud, sir, and forced themselves upon my ear." "Well, Mrs. Cluppins," said Sergeant Buzfuz, "you were not listening, but you heard the voices." It was in 1938, then, that the third voice began to force itself upon my ear.[12]

At this point I can fancy the reader murmuring:[13†] "I'm sure he has said all this before." I will assist memory by supplying the reference. In a lecture on "Poetry and Drama," delivered exactly three years ago and subsequently published, I said:

"In writing other verse (i.e. non-dramatic verse) I think that one is writing, so to speak, in terms of one's own voice: the way it sounds when you read it to yourself is the test. For it is yourself speaking. The question of communication, of what the reader will get from it, is not paramount . . ."[14†]

There is some confusion of pronouns in this passage, but I think that the meaning is clear; so clear, as to be a glimpse of the obvious. At that stage, I noted only the difference between speaking for oneself, and speaking for an imaginary character; and I passed on to other considerations about the nature of poetic drama. I was beginning to be aware of the difference between the first and the third voice, but gave no attention to the second voice, of which I shall say more presently. I am now trying to penetrate a little further into the problem. So, before going on to consider the other voices, I want to pursue for a few moments the complexities of the third voice.[15†]

In a verse play, you will probably have to find words for several characters differing widely from each other in background, temperament, education, and intelligence. You cannot afford to identify one of these characters with yourself, and give him (or her) all the "poetry" to speak. The poetry (I mean, the language at those dramatic moments when it reaches intensity) must be as widely distributed as characterization permits; and each of your characters, when he has words to speak which are poetry and not merely verse, must be given lines appropriate to himself. When the poetry comes, the personage on the stage must not give the impression of being merely a mouthpiece for the author. Hence the author is limited by the kind of poetry, and the degree of intensity in its kind, which can be plausibly attributed to each character in his play. And these lines of poetry must also justify themselves by their development of the situation in which they are spoken. Even if a burst of magnificent poetry is suitable enough for the character to which it is assigned, it must also convince us that it is necessary to the action; that it is helping to extract the utmost emotional intensity out of the situation. The poet writing for the theatre may, as I have found, make two mistakes: that of assigning to a personage lines of poetry not suitable to be spoken by that personage, and that of assigning lines which, however suitable to the personage, yet fail to forward the action of the play. There are, in some of the minor Elizabethan dramatists, passages of magnificent poetry which are in both respects out of place – fine enough to preserve the play for ever as literature, but yet so inappropriate as to prevent the play from being a dramatic masterpiece. The best-known instances occur in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*.[16]

How have the very great dramatic poets – Sophocles, or Shakespeare, or Racine – dealt with this difficulty? This is, of course, a problem which concerns all imaginative fiction – novels and prose plays – in which the characters may be said to live. I can't see, myself, any way to make a character live except to have a profound sympathy with that character. Ideally, a dramatist, who has usually far fewer characters to manipulate than a novelist, and who has only two hours or so of life to allow them, should sympathize profoundly with all of his characters: but that is a counsel of perfection, because the plot of a play with even a very small cast may require the presence of one or more characters in whose reality, apart from their contribution to the action, we are uninterested. I wonder, however, whether it is possible to make completely real a wholly villainous character – one toward whom neither the author nor anyone else can feel anything but antipathy. We need an admixture of weakness with either heroic virtue or satanic villainy, to make character plausible. Iago frightens me more than Richard III; I am not sure that Parolles, in *All's Well That Ends Well*, does not disturb me more than Iago. (And I am quite sure that Rosamund Vincy, in *Middlemarch*, frightens me far more than Goneril or Regan.)[17†] It seems to me that what happens, when an author creates a vital character, is a sort of give-and-take. The author may put into that character, besides its other attributes, some trait of his own, some strength or weakness, some tendency to violence or to indecision, some eccentricity even, that he has found in himself. Something perhaps never realized in his own life, something of which those who know him best may be unaware, something not restricted in transmission to characters of the same temperament, the same age, and, least of all, of the same sex. Some bit of himself that the author gives to a character may be the germ from which the life of that character starts. On the other hand, a character which succeeds in interesting its author may elicit from the author latent potentialities of his own being. I believe that the author imparts something of himself to his characters, but I also believe that he is influenced by the characters he creates. It would be only too easy to lose oneself in a maze of speculation about the process by which an imaginary character can become as real for us as people we have known. I have penetrated into this maze so far only to indicate the difficulties, the limitations, the fascination, for a poet who is used to writing poetry in his own person, of the problem of making imaginary personages talk poetry. And the difference, the abyss, between writing for the first and for the third voice.

The peculiarity of my third voice, the voice of poetic drama, is brought out in another way by comparing it with the voice of the poet in non-dramatic poetry which has a dramatic element in it – and conspicuously in the dramatic monologue. Browning, in an uncritical moment, addressed himself as "Robert Browning, you writer of plays."[18] How many of us have read a play by Browning more than once; and, if we have read it more than once, was our motive the expectation of enjoyment? What personage, in a play by Browning, remains living in our mind? On the other hand, who can forget Fra Lippo Lippi, or Andrea del Sarto, or Bishop Blougram, or the other bishop who ordered his tomb?[19] It would seem without further examination, from Browning's mastery of the dramatic monologue, and his very moderate achievement in the drama, that the two forms must be essentially different. Is there, perhaps, another voice which I have failed to hear, the voice of the dramatic poet whose dramatic gifts are best exercised outside of the theatre? And certainly, if any poetry, not of the stage, deserves to be characterized as "dramatic," it is Browning's.

In a play, as I have said, an author must have divided loyalties; he must sympathize with characters who may be in no way sympathetic to each other. And he must allocate the "poetry" as widely as the limitations of each imaginary character permit. This necessity to divide the poetry implies some variation of the style of the poetry according to the character to whom it is given. The fact that a number of characters in a play have claims upon the author, for their allotment of poetic speech, compels him to try to extract the poetry from the character, rather than impose his poetry upon it. Now, in the dramatic monologue we have no such check. The author is just as likely to identify the character with himself, as himself with the character: for the check is missing that will prevent him from doing so – and that check is the necessity for identifying himself with some other character replying to the first. What we normally hear, in fact, in the dramatic monologue, is the voice of the poet, who has put on the costume and make-up either of some historical character, or of one out of fiction. His personage must be identified to us – as an individual, or at least as a type – before he begins to speak. If, as frequently with Browning, the poet is speaking in the role of an historical personage, like Lippo Lippi, or in the role of a known character of fiction, like Caliban, he has taken possession of that character. And the difference is most evident in his "Caliban upon Setebos." In *The Tempest*, it is Caliban who speaks; in "Caliban upon Setebos," it is Browning's voice that we hear, Browning talking aloud through Caliban.[20] It was Browning's greatest

disciple, Mr. Ezra Pound, who adopted the term "persona" to indicate the several historical characters through whom he spoke: and the term is just.[21]

I risk the generalization also, which may indeed be far too sweeping, that dramatic monologue cannot create a character. For character is created and made real only in an action, a communication between imaginary people. It is not irrelevant that when the dramatic monologue is not put into the mouth of some character already known to the reader – from history or from fiction – we are likely to ask the question "Who was the original?" About Bishop Blougram people have always been impelled to ask, how far was this intended to be a portrait of Cardinal Manning, or of some other ecclesiastic?[22] The poet, speaking, as Browning does, in his own voice, cannot bring a character to life: he can only mimic a character otherwise known to us. And does not the point of mimicry lie in the recognition of the person mimicked, and in the incompleteness of the illusion? We have to be aware that the mimic and the person mimicked are different people: if we are actually deceived, mimicry becomes impersonation. When we listen to a play by Shakespeare, we listen not to Shakespeare but to his characters; when we read a dramatic monologue by Browning, we cannot suppose that we are listening to any other voice than that of Browning himself.

In the dramatic monologue, then, it is surely the second voice, the voice of the poet talking to other people, that is dominant. The mere fact that he is assuming a role, that he is speaking through a mask, implies the presence of an audience: why should a man put on fancy dress and a mask only to talk to himself? The second voice is, in fact, the voice most often and most clearly heard in poetry that is not of the theatre: in all poetry, certainly, that has a conscious social purpose – poetry intended to amuse or to instruct, poetry that tells a story, poetry that preaches or points a moral, or satire which is a form of preaching. For what is the point of a story without an audience, or of a sermon without a congregation? The voice of the poet addressing other people is the dominant voice of epic, though not the only voice. In Homer, for instance, there is heard also, from time to time, the dramatic voice: there are moments when we hear, not Homer telling us what a hero said, but the voice of the hero himself. *The Divine Comedy* is not in the exact sense an epic, but here also we hear men and women speaking to us. And we have no reason to suppose that Milton's sympathy with Satan was so exclusive as to seal him of the Devil's Party.[23] But the epic is essentially a tale told to an audience, while drama is essentially an action exhibited to an audience.

Now, what about the poetry of the first voice – that which is not primarily an attempt to communicate with anyone at all?

I must make the point that this poetry is not necessarily what we call loosely "lyric poetry." The term "lyric" itself is unsatisfactory. We think first of verse intended to be sung – from the songs of Campion and Shakespeare and Burns, to the arias of W. S. Gilbert, or the words of the latest "musical number."[24] But we apply it also to poetry that was never intended for a musical setting, or which we dissociate from its music: we speak of the "lyric verse" of the metaphysical poets, of Vaughan and Marvell as well as Donne and Herbert. The very definition of "lyric," in the Oxford Dictionary, indicates that the word cannot be satisfactorily defined:

> *Lyric*: Now the name for short poems, usually divided into stanzas or strophes, and directly expressing the poet's own thoughts and sentiments.

How short does a poem have to be, to be called a "lyric"? The emphasis on brevity, and the suggestion of division into stanzas, seem residual from the association of the voice with music. But there is no necessary relation between brevity and the expression of the poet's own thoughts and feelings. "Come unto these yellow sands" or "Hark! hark! the lark" are lyrics – are they not? – but what sense is there in saying that they express directly the poet's own thoughts and sentiments?[25] *London*, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, and *The Deserted Village* are all poems which appear to express the poet's own thoughts and sentiments, but do we ever think of such poems as "lyrical"?[26] They are certainly not short. Between them, all the poems I have mentioned seem to fail to qualify as lyrics, just as Mr. Daddy Longlegs and Mr. Floppy Fly failed to qualify as courtiers:

> One never more can go to court,
> Because his legs have grown too short;
> The other cannot sing a song,
> Because his legs have grown too long![27]

It is obviously the lyric in the sense of a poem "directly expressing the poet's own thoughts and sentiments," not in the quite unrelated sense of a short poem intended to be set to music, that is relevant to my first voice – the voice of the poet talking to himself – or to nobody. It is in this sense that the German poet Gottfried Benn, in a very interesting lecture entitled *Probleme der Lyrik*, thinks of lyric as the poetry of the first voice: he includes,

I feel sure, such poems as Rilke's Duinese Elegies and Valéry's *La Jeune Parque*. Where he speaks of "lyric poetry," then, I should prefer to say "meditative verse."[28]

What, asks Herr Benn in this lecture, does the writer of such a poem, "addressed to no one," start with?[29] There is first, he says, an inert embryo or "creative germ" (*ein dumpfer schöpferischer Keim*) and, on the other hand, the Language, the resources of the words at the poet's command.[30] He has something germinating in him for which he must find words; but he cannot know what words he wants until he has found the words; he cannot identify this embryo until it has been transformed into an arrangement of the right words in the right order. When you have the words for it, the "thing" for which the words had to be found has disappeared, replaced by a poem. What you start from is nothing so definite as an emotion, in any ordinary sense; it is still more certainly not an idea; it is – to adapt two lines of Beddoes to a different meaning – a

> bodiless childful of life in the gloom
> Crying with frog voice, "what shall be?"[31]

I agree with Gottfried Benn, and I would go a little further. In a poem which is neither didactic nor narrative, and not animated by any other social purpose, the poet may be concerned solely with expressing in verse – using all his resources of words, with their history, their connotations, their music – this obscure impulse. He does not know what he has to say until he has said it; and in the effort to say it he is not concerned with making other people understand anything. He is not concerned, at this stage, with other people at all: only with finding the right words or, anyhow, the least wrong words. He is not concerned whether anybody else will ever listen to them or not, or whether anybody else will ever understand them if he does. He is oppressed by a burden which he must bring to birth in order to obtain relief. Or, to change the figure of speech, he is haunted by a demon, a demon against which he feels powerless, because in its first manifestation it has no face, no name, nothing; and the words, the poem he makes, are a kind of form of exorcism of this demon. In other words again, he is going to all that trouble, not in order to communicate with anyone, but to gain relief from acute discomfort; and when the words are finally arranged in the right way – or in what he comes to accept as the best arrangement he can find – he may experience a moment of exhaustion, of appeasement,

of absolution, and of something very near annihilation, which is in itself indescribable. And then he can say to the poem: "Go away! Find a place for your self[32†] in a book – and don't expect *me* to take any further interest in you."

I don't believe that the relation of a poem to its origins is capable of being more clearly traced. You can read the essays of Paul Valéry, who studied the workings of his own mind in the composition of a poem more perseveringly than any other poet has done.[33] But if, either on the basis of what poets try to tell you, or by biographical research, with or without the tools of the psychologist, you attempt to explain a poem, you will probably be getting further and further away from the poem without arriving at any other destination. The attempt to explain the poem by tracing it back to its origins will distract attention from the poem, to direct it on to something else which, in the form in which it can be apprehended by the critic and his readers, has no relation to the poem and throws no light upon it. I should not like you to think that I am trying to make the writing of a poem more of a mystery than it is. What I am maintaining is, that the first effort of the poet should be to achieve clarity for himself, to assure himself that the poem is the right outcome of the process that has taken place. The most bungling form of obscurity is that of the poet who has not been able to express himself *to* himself; the shoddiest form is found when the poet is trying to persuade himself that he has something to say when he hasn't.

So far I have been speaking, for the sake of simplicity, of the three voices as if they were mutually exclusive: as if the poet, in any particular poem, was speaking *either* to himself or to others, and as if neither of the first two voices was audible in good dramatic verse. And this indeed is the conclusion to which Herr Benn's argument appears to lead him: he speaks as if the poetry of the first voice – which he considers, moreover, to be on the whole a development of our own age – was a totally different kind of poetry from that of the poet addressing an audience.[34] But for me the voices are most often found together – the first and second, I mean, in non-dramatic poetry; and together with the third in dramatic poetry too. Even though, as I have maintained, the author of a poem may have written it primarily without thought of an audience, he will also want to know what the poem which has satisfied *him* will have to say to other people. There are, first of all, those few friends to whose criticism he may wish to submit it before considering it completed. They can be very helpful, in suggesting a word or a phrase which

the author has not been able to find for himself;[35] though their greatest service perhaps is to say simply "this passage won't do" – thus confirming a suspicion which the author had been suppressing from his own consciousness. But I am not thinking primarily of the few judicious friends whose opinion the author prizes, but of the larger and unknown audience – people to whom the author's name means only his poem which they have read. The final handing over, so to speak, of the poem to an unknown audience, for what that audience will make of it, seems to me the consummation of the process begun in solitude and without thought of the audience, the long process of gestation of the poem, because it marks the final separation of the poem from the author. Let the author, at this point, rest in peace.

So much for the poem which is primarily a poem of the first voice. I think that in every poem, from the private meditation to the epic or the drama, there is more than one voice to be heard. If the author never spoke to himself, the result would not be poetry, though it might be magnificent rhetoric; and part of our enjoyment of great poetry is the enjoyment of *overhearing* words which are not addressed to us. But if the poem were exclusively for the author, it would be a poem in a private and unknown language; and a poem which was a poem only for the author would not be a poem at all. And in poetic drama, I am inclined to believe that all three voices are audible. First, the voice of each character – an individual voice different from that of any other character: so that of each utterance we can say, that it could only have come from that character. There may be from time to time, and perhaps when we least notice it, the voices of the author and the character in unison, saying something appropriate to the character, but something which the author could say for himself also, though the words may not have quite the same meaning for both. That may be a very different thing from the ventriloquism which makes the character only a mouthpiece for the author's ideas or sentiments.

To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow . . .[36†]

Is not the perpetual shock and surprise of these hackneyed lines evidence that Shakespeare and Macbeth are uttering the words in unison, though perhaps with somewhat different meaning? And finally there are the lines, in plays[37†] by one of the supreme poetic dramatists, in which we hear a more impersonal voice still than that of either the character or the author.

Ripeness is all[38]

or

Simply the thing I am
Shall make me live.[39]

And now I should like to return for a moment to Gottfried Benn and his unknown, dark *psychic material*[40] – we might say, the octopus or angel with which the poet struggles. I suggest that between the three kinds of poetry to which my three voices correspond there is a certain difference of process. In the poem in which the first voice, that of the poet talking to himself, dominates, the "psychic material" tends to create its own form – the eventual form will be to a greater or less degree the form for that one poem and for no other. It is misleading, of course, to speak of the material as creating or imposing its own form: what happens is a simultaneous development of form and material; for the form affects the material at every stage; and perhaps all the material does is to repeat "not that! not that!" in the face of each unsuccessful attempt at formal organization; and finally the material is identified with its form. But in poetry of the second and in that of the third voice, the form is already to some extent given. However much it may be *trans*formed before the poem is finished, it can be represented from the start by an outline or scenario. If I choose to tell a story, I must have some notion of the plot of the story I propose to tell; if I undertake satire, moralizing, or invective, there is already something given which I can recognize and which exists for others as well as myself. And if I set out to write a play, I start by an act of choice: I settle upon a particular emotional situation, out of which characters and a plot will emerge, and I can make a plain prose outline of the play in advance – however much that outline may be altered before the play is finished, by the way in which the characters develop. It is likely, of course, that it is in the beginning the pressure of some rude unknown *psychic material* that directs the poet to tell that particular story, to develop that particular situation. And on the other hand, the frame, once chosen, within which the author has elected to work, may itself evoke other psychic material; and then, lines of poetry may come into being, not from the original impulse, but from a secondary stimulation of the unconscious mind. All that matters is, that in the end the voices should be heard in harmony; and, as I have said, I doubt whether in any real poem only one voice is audible.

The reader may well, by now, have been asking himself[41†] what I have been up to in all these speculations. Have I been toiling to weave a laboured web of useless ingenuity? Well, I have been trying to talk, not to myself – as you may have been tempted to think – but to the reader of poetry. I should like to think that it might interest the reader of poetry to test my assertions in his own reading. Can you distinguish these voices in the poetry you read, or hear recited, or hear in the theatre? If you complain that a poet is obscure, and apparently ignoring you, the reader, or that he is speaking only to a limited circle of initiates from which you are excluded – remember that what he may have been trying to do, was to put something into words which could not be said in any other way, and therefore in a language which may be worth the trouble of learning. If you complain that a poet is too rhetorical, and that he addresses you as if you were a public meeting, try to listen for the moments when he is not speaking to you, but merely allowing himself to be overheard: he may be a Dryden, a Pope, or a Byron. And if you have to listen to a verse play, take it first at its face value, as entertainment, for each character speaking for himself with whatever degree of reality his author has been able to endow him. Perhaps, if it is a great play, and you do not try too hard to hear them, you may discern the other voices too. For the work of a great poetic dramatist, like Shakespeare, constitutes a world. Each character speaks for himself, but no other poet could have found those words for him to speak. If you seek for Shakespeare, you will find him only in the characters he created; for the one thing in common between the characters is that no one but Shakespeare could have created any of them. The world of a great poetic dramatist is a world in which the creator is everywhere present, and everywhere hidden.

NOTES

1. As printed in *OPP*. The eleventh Annual Lecture of the National Book League, delivered at the Central Hall, Westminster, on 19 Nov 1953. First printed in wrappers on 11 Dec 1953 as *The Three Voices of Poetry* (London: Published for The National Book League by the Cambridge UP, 1953). Pp. 23, [1] (hereafter *TVP*). Substantive differences between the two texts are noted; minor punctuation and spelling differences are not recorded.

TSE's fellow director Geoffrey Faber, a strong supporter of the League, invited him to give the annual lecture in early Feb 1952. "I should be very loth to decline to do anything that you asked of me," TSE replied on 5 Feb, "particularly in relation to anything which I know to be so dear to your heart as the National Book League. . . . I don't see how I could undertake to prepare another lecture for a date earlier than November." In the event, TSE's commitments delayed the lecture until Nov 1953, when "an audience of about 2500" attended, as reported in the *Times* of

20 Nov (11). The lecture was broadcast on the BBC Third Programme, 9:05-11:00 pm, on 23 Dec 1953, and re-broadcast on 28 Dec 1953 and 26 Sept 1954. Three TS drafts of the lecture and one final copy are in King's (H1M).

2†. In *TVP*: "who might have heckled me on this point, after the lecture, if they could have been present:"

3. Lines 5-10; 18; 21; 32-33; 50-52. *Poems of Robert Browning* (London: H. Frowde, Oxford UP, 1912), 159-60. TSE taught *Men and Women* (1855) in his 1916 Extension course on Modern English Literature (1.478), and in his letter to Scofield Thayer of 7 May 1916 he quoted the line "the century of sonnets" (*L1* 151).

4†. In *TVP*: "Rafael did not live to multiply his Madonnas:"

5. The Italian Renaissance painter Raphael (1483-1520), who died at the age of thirty-seven, painted over twenty Madonnas in his brief lifetime.

6. When his wife Elizabeth Siddal died in 1862, Dante Gabriel Rossetti buried most of his unpublished poems with her at Highgate Cemetery. He was later persuaded by friends, especially Charles Augustus Howell, to disinter them. TSE had included Rossetti's collection of sonnets *The House of Life* (1870) in the reading list for his Extension course on Modern English Literature in 1917 (1.590).

7†. In *TVP*: "audible to you"

8†. In *TVP*: "or, critics might say with more asperity, to Shaftesbury Avenue."

In "Yeats" (1940), TSE criticized "the successful urban Shaftesbury Avenue vulgarity" (6.86).

9. In Mar 1933, TSE was invited to collaborate on the pageant play *The Rock* by Rev. Rosslyn Webb Odell, the director of the Forty-Five Churches Fund which aimed to finance church-building in London.

10†. In *TVP*: "But in carrying out this task,"

11†. In *TVP*: "the charwomen of the Cathedral."

12. Charles Dickens, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (London: Thomas Nelson, [1912?]), 503. Chapter 34 of *The Pickwick Papers* (1836) "is wholly devoted to a full and faithful report of the trial of Bardell against Pickwick" (490). Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz is the lawyer representing Mrs. Bardell, who is suing Mr. Pickwick for the breach of promise to marry her. TSE wrote *The Family Reunion* in 1938.

13†. In *TVP*: "At this point I can fancy someone in the audience murmuring to a neighbour:"

14†. In *TVP*, this quotation is indented and not enclosed within quotation marks, and the following paragraph is not indented.

"Poetry and Drama," the first Theodore Spencer Memorial Lecture, was delivered on 21 Nov 1950 (7.589).

15†. In *TVP*, this is followed by: "I should not like to tarnish my reputation by giving any member of this audience cause to complain that I have made my discourse too intelligible."

16. In "Christopher Marlowe" (1919), TSE had discussed the "particularly 'lyric' effects found in *Tamburlaine*, not in Marlowe's other plays, and not, I believe, anywhere else" (2.99).

17†. This sentence appears without parentheses in *TVP*.

In *Othello*, the villain Iago deceives others while maintaining the appearance of honesty and trustworthiness. The subtitle of *Richard III* describes "His treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence: the pittiefull murther of his innocent nephewes: his tyrannical usurpation:

with the whole course of his detested life, and most deserved death." In *All's Well that Ends Well*, Parolles, a deceitful coward, pretends to be a valiant soldier and betrays his friend Bertram. Rosamond Vincy is the beautiful and manipulative character in George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch* (1874). In *King Lear*, Goneril and Regan falsely declare their love for their father to inherit his kingdom.

18. At the end of "A Light Woman" XIV, included in *Men and Women*, Browning writes: "Well, any how, here the story stays, / So far at least as I understand; / And, Robert Browning, you writer of plays, / Here's a subject made to your hand!" (*Poems of Robert Browning*, 76).

19. The dramatic monologues "Fra Lippo Lippi," "Bishop Blougram's Apology," and "Andrea del Sarto (Called 'The Faultless Painter')" are all included in *Men and Women*. In "Modern Tendencies in Poetry" (1920), TSE stated that Browning was "at his best" in "Bishop Blougram's Apology" (2.216). "The Bishop Orders his Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church" tells the story of a fictional bishop imparting instructions on his deathbed on how his tomb is to be constructed. In his letter to Scofield Thayer of 7 May 1916, TSE had quoted from the poem (*L1* 151).

20. In Browning's poem "Caliban upon Setebos," included in the volume *Dramatis Personae* (1864), Caliban, the enslaved character in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, has the opportunity to talk freely about Setebos, the monstrous deity he believes in.

21. Pound's debt to Browning is evident in his use of the dramatic monologue in "Cino" and other poems collected in *Personae* (1909).

22. The English Roman Catholic Cardinal Henry Edward Manning (1808-92) was the second Archbishop of Westminster. But the dramatic monologue "Bishop Blougram's Apology" is a representation of Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, the first Archbishop of Westminster. Browning told Sir Charles Gavan Duffy that "Bishop Blougram was intended to suggest Cardinal Wiseman." *My Life in Two Hemispheres*, vol 2 (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), 261.

23. In "Notes for a Lecture on John Milton" (1944), TSE maintained that Satan is not the hero of *Paradise Lost*, "it is simply that Milton discharges a great deal of his own spleen and pride through Satan, and as Milton is lacking in humility, so is Satan" (6.543).

24. TSE had previously singled out the songs of Thomas Campion, William Shakespeare, and Robert Burns as examples of songs composed to be sung in "Thinking in Verse: A Survey of Early Seventeenth-Century Poetry" (1930): "Now there are two kinds of 'music' in verse. One is that of the lyrics of Shakespeare or Campion, which *demand* the kindred music of the lute or other instrument; . . . and many songs of Burns and Heine make the same demand" (4.46). The English librettist Sir William Schwenck Gilbert (1836-1911) produced in partnership with the composer Sir Arthur Sullivan fourteen comic operas, including *H. M. S. Pinafore* (1878), *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879), and *The Mikado* (1885).

25. "Come unto these yellow sands" is Ariel's song to Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, I.ii; "Hark, hark! the lark" is Cloten's song from *Cymbeline*, II.iii.

26. In his introductory essay to Samuel Johnson's *London: A Poem* (1738) and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749), TSE wrote in 1930 that "both of them seem to me to be among the greatest verse Satires of the English or any other language" (4.172). Oliver Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* (1770) is placed "higher than any poem by Johnson or by Gray" in "Johnson as Critic and Poet" (1944) (8.203).

27. Edward Lear, "The Daddy Long-legs and the Fly," included in *Nonsense Songs and Stories* (1871), stanza VI, ll. 9-12. *Nonsense Songs and Stories* (London: Frederick Warne, 1888). TSE had already referred to this poem in 1950 in "The Aims of Education 1" (7.515).

28. In his lecture *Probleme der Lyrik* [*Problems of Lyric Poetry*] (Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1951), delivered at the University of Marburg on 21 Aug 1951, the German poet Gottfried Benn (1886-1956) refers both to Valéry's *La Jeune Parque* (1917) and Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duineser Elegien* (1923): "Valéry schwieg zwanzig Jahre, Rilke schrieb vierzehn Jahre keine Gedichte, dann erschienen die Duineser Elegien" (29). [*Trans*: Valéry was silent for twenty years; Rilke wrote no poems for fourteen years, and then the *Duino Elegies* appeared.] This is in the context of his assertion that one has to be able to keep themes inside, for years if necessary, until they are ready to be put down on paper.

29. When discussing the question of whom the poem is addressed to, Benn paraphrases Richard Wilbur's answer: "Ein Gedicht, sagt er, ist an die Muse gerichtet, und diese ist unter anderem dazu da, die Tatsache zu verschleiern, daß Gedichte an niemanden gerichtet sind." [*Trans*: A poem, he says, is addressed to the Muse, and she is there, among other things, to cover up the fact that poems are addressed to no one.] He goes on to describe "der monologische Charakter der Lyrik" [the monologic character of lyric poetry], defining it "eine anachoretische Kunst" [an anachoretic art] (14).

30. In elucidating the "Vorgang beim Entstehen eines Gedichts" [process in the genesis of a poem], Benn lists three elements which the poet has at his disposal, the first one being "einen dumpfen schöpferischen Keim, eine psychische Materie" [a vague creative germ, psychic matter], and the second "Worte, die in seiner Hand liegen, zu seiner Verfügung stehen, mit denen er umgehen kann, die er bewegen kann" [words that are in his hands, at his disposal, which he can handle, which he can move around] (18).

31. Song by Isbrand in Thomas Beddoes's *Death's Jest-Book; or, The Fool's Tragedy*, III.iii (London: Pickering, 1850, 86).

32†. In *TVP*: "yourself"

33. TSE evidently refers to the essays contained in Valéry's five-volume collection of prose *Variété* (1924-44), especially "Poésie et pensée abstraite" (1939) in the fifth book, from which he quoted frequently. In 1958, TSE wrote the introduction to Valéry's *The Art of Poetry* (8.261).

34. Toward the end of his address, Benn discusses the "monologischer Zug" of "das moderne Gedicht" [monologic feature of the modern poem] and goes on to state "daß ich persönlich das moderne Gedicht nicht für vortragsfähig halte" [that I personally do not regard modern poetry as capable of being read out] (44), arguing in essence that modern poetry should be read silently on paper rather than recited out loud.

35. TSE acknowledged John Hayward's assistance in the composition of *Four Quartets* in the first UK edition of the poem (1944): "I wish to acknowledge my obligation to friends for their criticism, and particularly to Mr. John Hayward for improvements of phrase and construction." The full record is to be found in Helen Gardner's *The Composition of "Four Quartets"* (1978).

36†. In *TVP*: "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow . . ."; *read*: "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow"; Macbeth's response to the news of his wife's death in *Macbeth* V.v.19.

37†. In *TVP*: "in a play"

38. Edgar in *King Lear* V.ii.11

39. *All's Well that Ends Well* IV.iii.333-34

40. TSE translates Benn's "eine psychische Materie" [psychic matter].
41†. In *TVP*: "You may well, by now, have been asking yourselves"

TEXTUAL NOTE

TVP began with the following section, omitted in *OPP*:

There may be four voices. There may be, perhaps, only two. I say this to indicate the tentative nature of my enquiry. And I wish to explain at once why I have chosen, for such a serious occasion as the National Book League Annual Lecture, to propound a notion the validity of which is uncertain, and the value of which, even if true, may be questionable.

In choosing a subject about which to speak on such an occasion as this, I have two preliminary aims in mind. One is, to avoid saying anything that I have said before; the other is, to avoid saying anything that somebody else has said before – and probably said better. These aims together are almost impossible of realisation. Most of us have very few original ideas, in the course of a lifetime; most of our original ideas come to us when we are young and inexperienced; and some of us devote our later years to trying to express the same ideas better, or to facing the fact that they are not nearly so original as they once seemed to be. Alas! if there is no truth that has not been discovered by our ancestors, then there is also no possible error by which they have not been deceived. Yet we go on, to the end of our lives, hoping to say something that we have never said before, that no one else has ever said before, something which is worth saying, something which is even *true*. And while we are under the illusion that we have found such a thing to say, it seems to us at the moment the best offering that we can possibly make to any audience.

I shall explain at once what I mean by the "three voices."

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PART II
Signed Letters and Documents with Multiple Authorship

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Austrian Book Committee

To the Editor of *The Cambridge Review*[1]

The Cambridge Review, 68 (26 Apr 1947) 400

Sir, – There must be many, not only professional scholars, who feel an anxiety to give what present help they can in the task of restoring the stricken centres of learning on the Continent so that each can again make its special contribution to our culture. This is to draw attention to the urgent need of scholars and students in Austria, particularly in Vienna. Those of us who have recently visited Austria have been deeply impressed by the range and quality of what Austrian scholars are already doing under very adverse conditions, and by the eagerness of their desire – after eight years of politically imposed isolation – to regain contact with the work of scholars in the Western world. Their intellectual isolation is such that they lack the means even to discover what work has been done and what books have been published outside Austria since 1938, still less to procure any learned publications of which they may happen to hear word. The need is especially pressing in the humanities and social sciences, where valiant attempts to renew a great tradition and to shake off the effects of long Nazi censorship are frustrated by want of the barest minimum of literature required for renewed integration with Western scholarship.

The signatories of this letter are trying to organise a collection of the more important books and periodicals bearing on the humanities and social sciences published in this country since 1938, and to arrange their transport to the Austrian National Library in Vienna. Some, we hope, may be obtained from authors and others with copies to spare; but funds will also be needed to purchase expensive standard works and, more particularly, certain bibliographical reference books, if Austrian libraries are to be enabled to learn what they have missed for eight years. We beg, therefore, through the hospitality of your columns, to appeal to your readers for books and money for this purpose. Books for transmission to Vienna may be sent to Professor F. Saxl, Warburg Institute, University of London, Imperial Institute Buildings, S.W.7, marked "Austrian Book Committee"; cheques or money orders to the Treasurer of the Committee, Dr. Georg Tugendhat, Adelaide House,

London Bridge, E.C.4, crossed "Coutts and Co., Austrian Book Committee," or direct to the bankers, Messrs. Coutts and Co., 440 Strand, W.C.2.

Yours, etc.,

H. I. BELL, BEVERIDGE, G. N. CLARK, GEOFFREY CROWTHER, WALTER DE LA MARE, CAMPBELL DODGSON, T. S. ELIOT, GEORGE FRANCKENSTEIN, F. A. HAYEK, H. F. JOLOWICZ, LINDSAY OF BIRKER, O. E. NIEMEYER, EDNA PURDIE, F. SAXL, CHARLES K. WEBSTER, DOUGLAS WOODRUFF

NOTES

1. An exact replica of this letter and its signatories appeared under the heading "Books for Austria" in the *Burlington Magazine*, 89 (May 1947), 137.

Foreword to *Pusey House Diamond Jubilee: Inauguration of Friends of Pusey House*, by Pusey House

Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1947], n.p.

During the current year we commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Pusey House and the Silver Jubilee of the present Principal's connection with it.[1] What more appropriate season could be found for uniting its friends in a firm organization for its support?

Certainly it does not lack friends. Many Oxford men would find it almost impossible to think of the University without the Pusey House in the background with its friendly atmosphere, its opportunity for quiet reading, and the spiritual invigoration of its Chapel services.

To those who have benefited from its work and to all others who have the religious interests of the University at heart we have much pleasure in commending the new foundation of the FRIENDS OF PUSEY HOUSE.

WM: LONDIN:, KENNETH OXON:, T. S. ELIOT,
HALIFAX, GILLIE POTTER, SANKEY, DOROTHY L. SAYERS

31 May 1947

NOTES

1. Pusey House, its Diamond Jubilee brochure subtitled "A Centre of Christian Life at Oxford University," opened its chapel and library in 1884 as an Anglo-Catholic institution to carry on the work of Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-82), a leader of the Tractarian Movement, Canon of Christ Church College, and holder of the Regius Chair in Hebrew for over forty years. Archibald Frederic Hood (1895-1975), the likely author of the foreword and brochure, served as the fifth Principal from 1934 to 1951. Notice of the appeal and its signatories appeared in the *Times* of 26 May 1947 (7). A copy of the full brochure is in the Pusey Library.

Control of Atomic Energy: Appeal for Anglo-U.S. Approach to Russia

The Manchester Guardian (22 Dec 1947) 5[1]

As a result of the failure of the Foreign Ministers' Conference a group of prominent people in Britain, including members of both Houses of Parliament, have issued a statement drawing attention to what they regard as the seriousness of the threat of letting loose an atomic war as a result of a deterioration of international relations.

After pointing to respects in which Communism, Fascism, and Nazism resemble each other, and to the concern felt at the growing strength of Communism the document says: "All attempts to control atomic energy have been frustrated by the intransigence of the Soviet Union. Unless within the very near future strict international control of atomic energy is established we shall face a desperate world situation." The idea of despots that war could be localised was a dangerous illusion, as was shown in 1914, and the illusion was infinitely multiplied in an atomic age. The signatories add –

Suspicions and strains were greatly increased as the time draws nearer when atomic and other weapons of mass destruction will probably be possessed by the major Powers and may be possessed by minor Powers. If the peoples of America and Britain have to choose between being engulfed by Communism and a new war, we believe that they would choose war.

SOVIET PARTICIPATION

We think that it should be clearly indicated to the Soviet Union that a policy of wishing to have the fruits of war, without war itself, might eventually land them into a war which they do not, in our opinion, desire. We should make one last attempt, at the highest possible level, to secure Soviet participation in a scheme for the control of atomic energy. Above all, it should be pointed out to Mr. Stalin, by Mr. Attlee and President Truman, that it is to the interests of the Soviet Union that an atomic war should be averted.

If this last and most powerful intervention were to fail, we suggest that the freedom-loving Powers closely associated with Britain and America should act in concert. They should together develop such a predominance of defensive strength, including atomic strength, that no Power would dare

to challenge them. If this policy had been followed before 1939 there would have been no war.

COMMUNIST FIFTH COLUMN

The document goes on:

It is the sad fact that after six years of war the Allies overthrew one form of totalitarianism only to see another form become even more powerful in Europe than Fascism had been. It is most important for the British people to realise that the Communist fifth column in Britain is far more dangerous and powerful than the Fascist fifth column ever was.[2]

Liberty is sporadically dying and needs for survival a fervour at least equal to that of the force arrayed against it. This ideal cannot be achieved unless far greater attention is paid to a regeneration of the moral, spiritual, and religious consciousness of the British people.

The signatories of the document are:

LADY VIOLET BONHAM CARTER, THE VERY REVEREND W. R. MATTHEWS (DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S), MR. T. S. ELIOT, LORD BRABAZON OF TARA, LORD QUIBELL, EARL RUSSELL (BERTRAND RUSSELL), LORD VANSITTART, MR. RAYMOND BLACKBURN, M.P., MR. CLEMENT DAVIES, M.P., THE REV. GORDON LANG, M.P., AND MR. TOM O'BRIEN, M.P.[3]

NOTES

1. This letter to the press appeared under different titles in edited or shortened form in the *Sunday Times*, the *Sunday Post* (Glasgow), the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Indianapolis Star* on 21 Dec, and in the *Times*, the *Manchester Guardian*, and the *Scotsman* (Edinburgh) on 22 Dec. TSE wrote to Philip Mairet on 23 Dec: "I was rather surprised by the notice in the *Observer*. Blackburn sent me a draft some time ago, and I approved it with certain criticisms; but I had expected it to be submitted again before I could be considered to have 'signed' it. I have written to ask him to send me a copy of the version sent to the press. He seems to be an enthusiastic but hasty young man" (Ransom). Albert Raymond Blackburn (1915-91), a Labour MP, member of the National Peace Council, and spokesman for the British Atomic Scientists' Association (ASA), was highly critical of Soviet atomic energy policy and persistent in presenting the ASA's views regarding the security provisions of the British Atomic Energy Act of 1946. No copy of Blackburn's original document or a version sent to the press has been traced. The *Manchester Guardian* and the *Observer* contain the fullest account, but none contains the complete document in the right order.

2. The following sentence, also warning about the threat of Communism to British society, only appears in the *Observer*: "'It is essential,' the document says, 'that the British public should realise that appeasement of Communism has gone too far already, that we must oppose

Communist infiltration in the Trade Union Movement, and elsewhere, with all our heart and strength, and that in the conduct of our foreign affairs we must do all that we can to halt the advance of the police State across Europe before it becomes so powerful that it will in the end engulf us'" (1).

3. The *Washington Post* identifies the signatories more fully at the end: "Lady Violet Bonham Carter, former president of the Liberal Party; Lord Vansittart, former Foreign Office official; Conservative Lord Brabazon, who was a member of the wartime coalition government; Lord Quibell, Labor peer, and three Labor members of Commons – Raymond Blackburn, Tom O'Brien and the Rev. Gordon Lang" and earlier in the article: "Bertrand Russell, the famed philosopher; the Rev. W. R. Matthews, dean of St. Paul's Cathedral; T. S. Eliot, the poet, and Clement Davies, head of the Parliamentary Liberal Party" (1).

The Fat Ration

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (31 Jan 1948) 5

Sir, – We wish to protest against the raising of our fat ration from seven to eight ounces a week, when according to your Correspondent millions of the Germans in our charge have had no fats at all for weeks and are living on a diet of little but grey bread, cereals, and sugar.[1] Is it realized that the additional ounce which we are receiving, if sent to Germany, would itself virtually meet the whole official, but very largely non-existent, fat ration?

Yours, &c.,

SIDNEY M. BERRY, BEVERIDGE, VIOLET BONHAM CARTER, HENRY CARTER, GEORGE CICESTR., L. JOHN COLLINS, M. G. COWAN, EDWARD, BISHOP OF NOTTINGHAM, T. S. ELIOT, MICHAEL FOOT, VICTOR GOLLANCZ, EVA M. HUBBACK, AUGUSTUS JOHN, ROSE MACAULAY, GILBERT MURRAY, MARIAN E. PARMOOR, C. E. RAVEN, RUSSELL, R. R. STOKES, ROY WALKER

NOTES

1. Under the heading "Workers Protest against Food Shortages," the correspondent for the *Times* had reported in the issue of 17 Jan that strikes were occurring in the Ruhr towns of Duisburg and Mühlheim in the British zone over fat rations and a declaration from the Food Ministers that after 31 Jan inhabitants would receive "no fats at all" (4).

Historic Milton Window[1]

To the Editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*

The Times Literary Supplement (7 Feb 1948) 79

Sir, – The historic Milton Window in St. Margaret's, Westminster, was severely damaged in the war by a high-explosive bomb, and we, the undersigned, feel that it cannot be allowed to remain in its present mutilated condition. It was presented in 1888 by Mr. George W. Childs, of Philadelphia, in memory of John Milton, whose marriage in 1656 to Katherine Woodcock, his second wife, is recorded in the Parish Registers. She died in the following year and was buried in St. Margaret's Churchyard, together with their infant daughter. Among those present at the unveiling of the window were Matthew Arnold, Robert Browning, W. E. H. Lecky, and the United States Minister.[2]

The cost of repairing the window is estimated at £125. The parish of St. Margaret's has no fund available for this purpose. We therefore appeal to all who honour Milton's memory to contribute to the work of restoration.

Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to the Milton Memorial Fund, or Bearer, and forwarded to the Manager of the Midland Bank Ltd., East Grinstead, Sussex, who will acknowledge them. Should the sum contributed exceed the amount required, the balance will be devoted to perpetuating in some way (which will be announced) the memory of this great Englishman.[3]

C. E. RAVEN (Chairman). A. RUSSELL SMITH
(Secretary and Treasurer). T. S. ELIOT.
ISAAC FOOT. E. M. W. TILLYARD. CHARLES SMYTH.

NOTES

1. An edited version of this letter had appeared as a summary article in the *Times* of 29 Dec 1947 under the heading "Milton Memorial Window" (6). TSE wrote to the *TLS* editor Stanley Morrison on 3 Feb 1948 to request publication of the letter there: "The notice did appear in *The Times* itself but not in the correspondence column. I am given to understand that the form in which *The Times* printed it is considered to give an appeal a kind of official support of *The Times* itself, but I suppose that appearing on a later page it missed the attention of many readers. At any rate the result has been that so far we have only received a few pounds."

TSE had agreed to become a member of the Milton Window Committee on the invitation of A. Russell Smith on 15 July 1947: "I am afraid I have not been in St. Margaret's since the war,

and do not know the condition of this window. May I ask whether it is merely a question of replacing fragments or will it involve a new window? I presume the former as the latter would, I imagine, cost a good deal more than the sum you mention."

2. The newspaper publisher and philanthropist George William Childs (1829-94) unveiled the window on 18 Feb 1888, having previously erected memorial windows for Shakespeare, William Cowper, and George Herbert. Archdeacon F. W. Farrar, rector of St. Margaret's, wrote in the *Times* of 21 Feb 1888 that the unveiling "was a purely private gathering of friends, each of whom came only by special invitation. Mr. Matthew Arnold read a paper on the genius of Milton in the vestry" (10).

3. As reported in the *Times* of 5 July 1949, the restoration of the broken glass in the window was completed the previous March by the stained-glass artist Joan Howson, who attended the ceremony in St. Margaret's to mark the restoration on American Independence Day, 4 July. TSE read Milton's sonnet, "Methought I saw my late espoused Saint," and E. M. W. Tillyard read an address on Milton (2).

Imprisoned Generals

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (25 Aug 1948) 5

Sir, – Certain statements have appeared in our Press about the treatment of the three German field-marshals now held in custody in Germany by the British military authorities.[1] If these statements are not correct an official denial should be issued forthwith. If they are, we desire to associate ourselves with the protests which have recently appeared in your columns from Captain Liddell Hart and Dr. Gilbert Murray.[2]

Two are aged 76 and 73 and are believed to be in a critical state of health. The reports state that they are kept in solitary confinement, under constant supervision with a light burning in each cell throughout the night, are forbidden to speak to each other, and are not allowed any privacy when visited by their families, not even permitted to shake hands with them. Such treatment of old and sick men, who are not charged with any crimes or offences, appears to us, if true, to be alien to all our traditions and likely to damage our national reputation.

We have the honour to be your obedient servants,

P. C. LOFTUS; C. K. ALLEN; T. S. ELIOT; OSBERT SITWELL; KENNETH PICKTHORN; TWEEDSMUIR; COLLIN BROOKS; DOUGLAS JERROLD; F. A. VOIGT

NOTES

1. TSE cabled to P. C. Loftus on 23 Aug: "Your letter August 20 Certainly but is it not desirable some liberals as well?"

2. The retired army captain and military correspondent B. H. Liddell Hart (1895-1970) wrote to the editor in the *Times* of 16 Aug about the illnesses and British mistreatment of three German field marshals – Gerd von Rundstedt (1875-1953), Walther von Brauchitsch (1881-1948), and Erich von Manstein (1887-1973) – confined again, after being returned to their homes in Germany, in prison camps in the British zone. "It was said that the latest series of Nuremberg trials was definitely the last," wrote Liddell Hart. "Are they going to be resumed in another guise?" (5).

After reading Liddell Hart's account, Gilbert Murray wrote to the editor on 19 Aug that "what alarms one most is the fear that in the awful conflict now silently raging in Europe between two standards of human conduct, we, who must by necessity as well as by our traditions be champions of the higher standard, are being infected by the things we hate" (5).

A Memorial to Goethe

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (3 Mar 1949) 5

Sir, – A society has been formed under the presidency of Dr. G. P. Gooch, C.H., F.B.A., to mark the bicentenary of Goethe's birth this year with a British Goethe Festival.[1] At this moment of international uncertainty Goethe's reconciliation of the idea of man as a free personality with the idea of man as a citizen of the world is of special importance. Goethe was a great figure in the development of modern thought, and this bicentenary provides an occasion to bring the universality of his genius before the people of Britain. We understand that in most countries of the world, however acute their differences, preparations are being made to honour Goethe's vision of mankind. The responsibility of the British people, with its long cultural tradition, is great and its opportunity unique.

Theatrical productions in English and German, concerts of music inspired by Goethe, a series of important lectures and conferences, and an exhibition of prints and drawings are in active preparation. We therefore urge that as wide a response as possible should be given to the appeal of the British Goethe Festival Society and that all who can will support it by becoming members.[2] Applications should be made to either of the honorary secretaries, Wilhelm Unger, 4B, Belsize Grove, N.W.3, or Elizabeth M. Wilkinson, 26, Brunswick Square, W.C.1.

We are, Sir, yours very truly,

E. N. DA C. ANDRADE, T. S. ELIOT,[3] ESHER, JULIAN HUXLEY, DESMOND MACCARTHY, GILBERT MURRAY, HAROLD NICOLSON, HERBERT READ, RUSSELL, G. BERNARD SHAW, SIMON OF WYTHENSHAWE, SYBIL THORNDIKE, RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

NOTES

1. George Peabody Gooch (1873-1968), Liberal politician, historian, and devotee of Goethe (born on 28 Aug 1749), about whom he wrote in *Germany and the French Revolution* (1920).

2. Gooch founded the British Goethe Festival Society in Dec 1948 as an ad hoc body of the English Goethe Society, established in 1886, which was itself organizing events for the Goethe

bicentenary celebration, including Thomas Mann's lecture "Goethe und die Demokratie" at the University of London in May 1949. The encouraging response to the appeal by Gooch and his signatories led to an increase in membership and a lecture series at University College, including Gooch's lecture a week after this letter appeared, "Goethe, the Liberal Conservative," published in the July 1949 issue of *German Life and Letters*.

3. TSE held mixed views of Goethe's work earlier in his career, writing in *UPUC*: "Of Goethe perhaps it is truer to say that he dabbled in both philosophy and poetry and made no great success of either" (4.649). He admired Goethe's *Conversations with Eckermann* (1.615; 3.576) and wrote to Paul Elmer More on 2 June 1930: "I am completely blind to the poetry of Goethe, except a few lyrics. The only Goethe whom I cherish and have found useful is the Goethe of Eckermann" (*L5* 209). TSE admitted to E. R. Curtius on 14 Feb 1949, less than three weeks before the publication of this appeal: "You are of course right about Goethe. My few peevish remarks about him have been the result of an early prejudice for which I do not know the reason. Someday I should like to write an essay to make some amends" (Bonn). In 1955, TSE lectured in Hamburg on "Goethe as the Sage" (8.62) on the occasion of his award of the 1954 Goethe Prize.

Statement of the Committee of the Fellows of the Library of Congress in American Letters[1]*

The Honorable Jacob K. Javits, of New York, demands an investigation into the circumstances of the award of the Bollingen Prize in Poetry for 1948 to Ezra Pound's *Pisan Cantos* and into the implications or questions raised by the attack upon the award in the *Saturday Review of Literature* and consequent controversy in literary circles.[2]

Mr. Javits further states that all the material on this controversy has been inserted by the Honorable James T. Patterson, of Connecticut, into the Appendix to the *Congressional Record* for July 19, 1949. The inserted material consists of two articles by a poet, Mr. Robert Hillyer; a letter, in reply partly to these, from the Librarian of Congress; and an editorial in reply to the letter, signed with the initials of Harrison Smith, president, and Norman Cousins, vice-president of the Saturday Review Associates, publishers of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, of which Mr. Cousins is also editor, and in which the material appeared.

It should be pointed out that this was not all the material then available on the literary controversy. Other literary periodicals had published comment and discussion on the award. This was, moreover, not all the material published up to that time in the *Saturday Review* itself. Besides considerable correspondence, there had appeared in the *Saturday Review* for June 11 an editorial, with which the Librarian's reply is also concerned, and which gave unqualified editorial backing to the validity of Mr. Hillyer's "charges." There had also appeared in the same issue [July 2] with the Librarian's letter, two editorial notes. One of these was in correction and clarification of an impression likely to be raised by, and the other in retraction of, a statement developed in Mr. Hillyer's articles. At the time of Mr. Javits' remarks, the editors had had, for over two weeks, a statement endorsed by the jurors, which was published in the *Saturday Review* for July 30, and was accompanied by another retraction of a very important implication of Mr. Hillyer's articles. [Mr. Javits inserted these two documents into the Appendix to the *Congressional Record* for August 2, 1949, p. A5205.] It should further be pointed out that the title given by Mr. Javits to the prize is not its correct published title, which is simply The Bollingen Prize in

Poetry. The title, Bollingen-Library of Congress award, used by Mr. Javits, is apparently quoted from the *Saturday Review*, and is employed by Mr. Hillyer and the editors. Whether or not deliberately, in conjunction with other statements and arrangements of material in their editorials and articles, it tends to create a false impression of the jurors' intentions as to the award. Finally, it should be pointed out that Miss Mary McGrory states in the Sunday *Star* (Washington) for July 31 that Mr. Javits was put in touch with the situation through a letter from Mr. Cousins.

Although Mr. Javits does not assert that any members of the Fellows in American Letters are fascists, it is apparent from his remarks, especially in the first sentence, and from the fourth paragraph of his accompanying letter to the Honorable Mary T. Norton, that he does entertain apprehensions of fascist infiltration, through their agency, into the Library of Congress (*Congressional Record*, July 21, 1949, p. 10123.) The sequence of facts to which attention has just been called strongly suggests that these apprehensions have been raised in his mind, and may well be raised in the minds of others, by the Hillyer articles and the *Saturday Review* editorial. How has this been accomplished?

The Librarian of Congress, in his letter published in the *Saturday Review* for July 2, and received by the editors some ten days previously, stated that the authors of the editorials and articles were under a public duty to produce evidence, beyond mere supposition, to support the damaging insinuation that the Fellows had abused for "evil ends" the authority entrusted to them. No evidence has been produced by them since that time to establish that there were fascist influences at work among the Fellows, nor can such evidence be produced by anyone. It has already been said that retractions or implied retractions have been made by the *Saturday Review* of matters bearing importantly on these insinuations. Yet since Mr. Javits and others may have been misled, there may be a public duty on the part of the Fellows to examine and expose the means of insinuation. These are chiefly three and their validity will be examined in turn.

1. *ATTEMPT TO LINK THE BOLLINGEN FOUNDATION WITH JUNG'S ALLEGED NAZISM*

That the Bollingen Foundation, named for the place of residence of Carl Jung, was, by virtue of its donor's and his deceased wife's sympathy with or interest in Jung's contributions to psychiatry, and of Jung's alleged adherence at some time to Nazi ideas, tainted with fascist leanings, and had

influenced the award, or the composition of the jury. The editorial clarification already referred to (*Saturday Review of Literature*, July 2 p. 23) is as follows:

> Since the publication of "Treason's Strange Fruit," by Robert Hillyer (*SRL* June 11) the editors have received a request for correction and clarification from the Bollingen Foundation:
>
> "Readers of Mr. Hillyer's articles might come away with the impression that the Foundation was responsible, in part at least, for the selection of Ezra Pound's 'The Pisan Cantos' as winner of the Bollingen-Library of Congress Award in poetry. While Bollingen Foundation spokesmen acknowledge that no such specific statement is made by Mr. Hillyer, it is important that no doubt be left in the minds of *SRL* readers concerning the fact that the relationship between the Bollingen Foundation and the Bollingen-Library of Congress poetry awards was confined to the original endowment for the prize, which, through courtesy, bears the name of the Foundation. But the Foundation was in no way responsible for the choice of the Fellows in American Letters of the Library of Congress who make the awards, or for the awards themselves. With the donation of the funds, the Foundation's connection with the matter ended. The Foundation did not know that Pound was being considered for the prize until the jury announced its choice. The Foundation had neither the right of selection nor of veto."
>
> The *Saturday Review* accepts the foregoing as a correct and complete statement of the facts.

In the Fellows' statement, the Librarian's letter, and the editorial comment on the Fellows' statement, the point is reinforced. It is, then, clearly published and admitted as proven that the Bollingen Foundation is free of responsibility for the award made, or for the composition of the Fellows. It should then as clearly be admitted as proven that the space devoted by Mr. Hillyer to linking the Bollingen Foundation with Jung's alleged Nazism is altogether irrelevant to the formation of any conception whatsoever as to the Fellows' views.

[Mr. Javits has read a draft of the foregoing statement and has asked that it may be made clear that in demanding an inquiry he did not refer to the origin of the word *Bollingen*, the association of Carl Jung with the controversy, or the possible influence of Mr. T. S. Eliot on the other jurors. He has

never questioned the right of the Fellows to make the award, but only the organization of the Fellows. L. H. EVANS.]

Insinuations in Mr. Hillyer's articles, however, are of so pervasive a nature that they must be combatted quickly here and there as one might a grass fire on a gusty day. The Fellows are frequently referred to by him as the "Bollingen group" and it may be supposed that the Fellows sought money from the Foundation for the prize, or that the Foundation was willing to grant it, through mutual fascist sympathies. But for this to be true there would have had to be knowledge available to either party of such leanings. It should be sufficient here to call attention to the failure on the part of the *Saturday Review* to produce any evidence of this, and to Mr. Hillyer's statement that there is no implication that Mr. Paul Mellon (President of the Foundation) had any knowledge of Jung's alleged connection with Nazism. The account of the establishment of the prize, on record at the library, shows that the Fellows and the Library sought funds from the Foundation because it had already signified its interest in poetry through a gift of funds for a series of poetry record albums.

Again, and as part of this stage in his process of insinuation, Mr. Hillyer attempts to link in a somewhat vaguer nexus of Jungian-fascistic sympathies the Foundation, the Pantheon Press, and the "new aestheticism," a term used by him for a literary school supposed to include an unspecified number of the jurors, as well as an unspecified number of other unnamed writers supposed to share their literary tastes and tendencies. A retraction as to the Pantheon Press appeared in the *Saturday Review* of July 2, page 23, and ran as follows:

> Also in connection with Mr. Hillyer's article, we received a friendly visit from Kyrill Schabert and Kurt Wolff, the executive officers of Pantheon Books, Inc., who took exception to Mr. Hillyer's statement: "Through the generosity of Paul Mellon, the Bollingen Foundation supports the Pantheon Press, a publishing house which issues many outpourings of the new aestheticism, the literary cult to which T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound are gods."
>
> We learned that Pantheon Books, Inc., is in no manner supported or controlled by Bollingen Foundation. Pantheon Books is an independent corporation and is not subsidized by the Bollingen Foundation. It does, however, manufacture, distribute, and announce in its catalogs the

Bollingen Series, published for the Bollingen Foundation, Inc., which is supported by Paul Mellon. Any inference that the Bollingen Series was in any other way related to Pantheon Books, Inc., is incorrect. A careful examination of the list of books published by Pantheon reveals no work of the nature suggested in Mr. Hillyer's article. Fairness dictates a retraction, which the editors and Mr. Hillyer are glad to make.

THE EDITORS.

II. *ELIOT'S ALLEGED FASCISM AND HIS SUPPOSED INFLUENCE ON THE JURY*

The second means by which implication of possible Fascist direction of the award is made is through the twofold assertion that Mr. T. S. Eliot is a disciple of Jung and that he undoubtedly "wielded great influence" in the award. The first statement is so phrased that it may be taken by persons uninformed in the matter as an accepted fact. As to this we have Mr. Eliot's word that so far from being a disciple of Jung, he has, he believes, never read a word of this writer, and knows his work only by rumor and report.[3] The notion may have arisen through the fact that Miss Elizabeth Drew, in *T. S. Eliot, the Design of His Poetry*, makes use of Jungian concepts and treatments of symbols in her interpretation of Mr. Eliot's poems; somewhat similar use of these concepts had been made by a writer in *Publications of the Modern Language Association*. But this can scarcely make Mr. Eliot himself a Jungian. A study of Blake's thought has been made which carries this application much further, and Mr. Hillyer, we suppose, would not call Blake a disciple of Jung. It means no more than that these critics, and possibly others, have found Jung's terms or concepts useful for their own purposes of analysis of the poetic texts. An anonymous writer, in a review of Miss Drew's book in *The New Yorker*, complained of this very introduction of Jung as irrelevant to a discussion of Eliot.

The second assertion, as to Mr. Eliot's influence over the jury in the matter of the award, is a speculation on Mr. Hillyer's part, of which the steps are not given. In the *Saturday Review* for July 30 (p. 22) is published a declaration by Mr. Paul Green, a dissenting juror, which says in part, "Literary judgments and preferences, like other matters of the mind, should be free. They certainly were in this matter." There also appears on the same page a statement signed by all other living members of the jury which says in part: ". . . the decision of the Jury for the Bollingen Prize was arrived at wholly by democratic procedure." This is followed by an editorial reply

which says in part: "We accept without further question their assurance that the decision of the Bollingen jury was 'arrived at wholly by democratic procedure.'"

If more specific comment is needed on this particular assertion the following facts are offered: There is on record at the Library a statement concurred in by other members of the jury that Mr. Eliot neither initiated the award to Pound nor in any way attempted to influence other members to vote for it. There are on record at the Library nine letters from the Fellows, addressed to the secretary, offering nominations for the prize at her request, and mailed from widely scattered addresses. From these the original list of fifteen titles to be considered was drawn up. Mr. Eliot, like some other members, turned in no nominations, and six jurors (one orally) nominated, with other titles, the work of Pound.

It is unnecessary to deal further here with the means by which Mr. Hillyer saw fit to build up the impression of a dictatorial will at work among the jury, and the presumption that its influence was un-American, fascistic, or proto-fascistic. Two statements, however, must be dealt with, for they bear on the question raised of the representative character of the Fellows as a whole, and the patriotism of those whose allegiance is to the United States.

The first is that "half the committee were disciples of Pound and Eliot and sympathetic to a group which has a genuine power complex." (*Saturday Review*. June 18, p. 38.) This is in part simply rhetorical reinforcement for the impression required by Mr. Hillyer, and cannot be answered since there is no way of knowing to what group he alludes. If to a "group" of Mr. Pound and Mr. Eliot, it is known that except for certain areas of literary sympathy, their views are very divergent. (This is pointed out even by Mr. Hillyer.) If to the group neither named nor numbered, and called by Mr. Hillyer "the new critics," "neo-esthetes," "poetry's new priesthood," etc., it would be even more variegated and include perhaps all those who have found anything to praise in poets Mr. Hillyer does not approve.

That half the group – that is, seven jurors – are *disciples* of Pound and Eliot could not possibly be sustained by examination of their work or of general critical estimates of it. No one juror has been generally described hitherto as a disciple of either, although influences have been remarked in a number of instances. Indeed, to say of this or any group of writers comparable in size, age distribution, and reputation that no such influences, direct or indirect, could be found in their work would be difficult and would amount to saying that they were indifferent to the literary development of their time.

The second statement as to the pernicious example of Mr. Eliot for the jurors is couched in an indirect fashion but can be simply and directly answered. It is to the effect that Mr. Hillyer has no doubt that members of the committee would think our ancestors made a grave mistake in throwing off British sovereignty. Excluding Mr. Eliot, who is a British subject, there is no shred of evidence in any writing or known act of any member of the jury to support this. None of the American-born members can have been called expatriates at any period, although several of them spent a year or more abroad, by the terms of a Guggenheim Fellowship or a Rhodes Scholarship. Mr. Auden, it is true, is an expatriate, but only because he has chosen to become an American citizen.

III. *THE AWARD ITSELF AS AN ALLEGED FASCIST ACTION*

The third means by which the implication is made of fascist direction of the award is through interpretation of the award itself. This will doubtless seem to many the most reasonable part of Mr. Hillyer's argument. Similar inferences had been drawn by others before the discovery of the Bollingen "plot" in the *Saturday Review*, and it brings up the important question of the ideological approach to poetry and to literature in general. This is, perhaps, the immediately crucial question, and to it the Librarian has provided a reply.[4]

Mr. Hillyer disposes of this third stage by triple action. First, the prize was adjudged in defiance of all critical standards to be a work so "disordered as to make the award seem like a hoax." Hence, the judgment must have been made out of secret sympathy with, or directed by an intention to belaud and advance, fascist and anti-semitic tendencies of the work. Second, the aura of the Bollingen-Eliot "plot" (discussed under steps I and II) is employed to suggest more forcibly that the Fellows had such sympathy; third, the statement of the jury is interpreted by him as saying that nothing matters but the mode of expression. The jury have given, he says, the award on these "neoaesthetic" grounds and this shows them to be in a state to be moved by "groping fascism," "a guided will" toward a new authoritarianism. In short, they are convicted both of having acted out of sympathy for the content and in total disregard of it. Or perhaps it would describe Mr. Hillyer's logic better to say that he hoped if he failed to convict them plausibly on the first count, to do so on the second.

This Siamese charge is indeed a monstrous one. Besides offending the sentiments of the jurors, it challenges the principle which they felt important

enough to stand by in the difficult matter of their recommendation, and it attempts to discredit a large body of writing by other than critical means. It must be fully met.

First, is there evidence that the award defied *all* critical standards? The *Pisan Cantos* was reviewed very favorably indeed in the following periodicals: The New York *Times*, The New York *Herald-Tribune Books*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *Hudson Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Sewanee Review*, and elsewhere. These are some citations from these reviews:

> "The best passages in the *Cantos*, which move between verse as speed and verse as song, are supreme."
>
> "The whole design is gradually becoming plain . . . *many passages of surpassing beauty*."
>
> "Of the language one can remark only the perfection . . . The superb 83rd Canto."
>
> "The Pisan Cantos are beautifully written; the diction firm, sound and elegant; the music and the image adding up to the dance."
>
> "The clown, the great poet, the pure fool, Parzifal, Propertius, and Poor Tom are all here in the new Cantos . . . the Pound of the Pisan Cantos still has the old magnificence."
>
> "At their least valuation I submit that these Cantos in which light and air – and song – move so freely are more exhilarating poetic sketch books – 'notes from the upper air' – than can be found elsewhere in our literature."

It is submitted that acknowledgments of this order of poetic distinction were not so widely made, by so many reviewers, for other eligible books. At the conclusion of a less favorable review of the *Cantos*, but one which treated them as a work of distinction, Robert Gorham Davis, in the *Partisan Review*, attributes to the *Pisan Cantos* "a new humanity, tenderness, maturity with no loss of lyric beauty or wit." In an article published after the award in the same periodical, but written earlier, John Berryman speaks of "the marvelous pages of the *Pisan Cantos*." In the *Saturday Review of Literature*, at the height of the controversy, Mr. William Rose Benét, poetry editor, confessed that he had found in the volume a very fine song, a long passage of "extraordinarily fine and sensitive poetry," moving passages, another long passage

of whose conception he says: "The stature of that moment needs no elaboration of my own," and other epigrammatic or descriptive lines which he thinks "will remain."

Secondly, is any suspicion of fascistic or anti-semitic leanings properly to be attached to the jurors through Mr. Hillyer's treatment of the lines which he says the majority of the jurors "not only tolerated but applauded"? Mr. Hillyer after interpreting the lines castigates them as "ruthless mockery of the Christian war dead." Set aside the question of whether this is a proper construction of the lines. Set aside the fact, pointed out by a writer in *Partisan Review*, which had first singled out these lines, that they are virtually the only lines in the poem on which such construction could be put. Is it at all a legitimate extension of the meaning of the award, would it be, of any award, that it amounts to agreement and applause for every sentiment and opinion expressed in the chosen work?

We submit that Mr. Hillyer's treatment of these lines is calculated to inflame the minds of those insufficiently acquainted with the work judged or the works and opinions of the judges, along lines already prepared for by means now admitted to be essentially false. We submit that the charge he makes is indescribably offensive to persons who through their personal and social sympathies were equally involved with others in the anxieties and griefs of the late war.

Or, apart from this peculiarly objectionable paragraph, is the suspicion of anti-semitism, or of fascistic tendencies, to be laid upon the jurors simply because they have pronounced the *Pisan Cantos* to be the best book, poetically, among those eligible for the prize? By Mr. Hillyer's interpretation of the statement accompanying the award, this imputation cannot logically be laid to them. But the affirmative jurors have no wish to equivocate because Mr. Hillyer may have done so in order to avoid libel. An assertion is now made on their behalf, which at the time they felt it unnecessary to make, except as it was to be understood from their joint statement. No sympathy for fascism, no condoning of anti-semitism exists among them. To assume that they may or must have such sympathies is to deny them the capacity to perceive literary distinction in a work, parts of which express and spring from attitudes and opinions that they do not share.[5]

It should have been understood by the editors of the *Saturday Review*, before these attacks were published, that the affirmative jurors did not at least necessarily share these opinions. Two had published comments in the *Partisan Review* (of which one was in part quoted, and distorted, in the

Saturday Review), specifically dissociating themselves from anti-semitism. One, Mr. W. H. Auden, has given a good deal of expression in his writings to condemnation of fascism, and sympathy for its victims, and is the husband of Erika Mann, an exile from Nazism. The other, Mr. Allen Tate, had from time to time expressed opinions on political and social matters (of which he has now provided a summary)[6] which, whether or not they are majority American opinion, are certainly not fascistic. Miss Louise Bogan, who had reviewed the *Pisan Cantos* in a laudatory manner some months before the award, and so might be presumed to be an affirmative juror, in this, and even more strongly in a review of earlier cantos, had expressed her disapprobation of what she felt to be Pound's attitudes in these respects. So had nearly all the writers of the favorable reviews cited, thus establishing that the incredible or suspect objectivity toward the poetry of the *Pisan Cantos* could be found outside the "Bollingen group." Mr. Eliot, who through his published admiration for Pound's work might be presumed to have been an affirmative juror, and was to say the least assumed to be one, was also known to have served the British government during the late war, and had expressed anti-totalitarian views in his writings.[7]*

Mr. Hillyer and the editors of the *Saturday Review* indicated that they did not care to believe that the jurors felt they were acting with critical objectivity in making the award. The statement which the jurors offered as to this point was approved editorially in the New York *Herald-Tribune*, the Baltimore *Sun*, and some other papers. Because it has been pretty generally misunderstood, it should be restated in context.

In discussion of the terms of the award as agreed upon with the Foundation, it had been established by the Fellows that the award was to be made for a book published during 1948, and on the book's literary merits. The responsibility assumed by the jurors, then, was to vote, each one, for the book he thought best as poetry. Their statement asserted this. The ballots taken established that to the great majority of the jurors, the *Pisan Cantos* seemed the best book. The letter recommending the award to the Librarian, and from which the published statement was quoted, stated this. The Library did not announce the ballot count, but this is not customary with other prize juries. There was no intention of making the vote appear unanimous, as has been suggested in a *Saturday Review* editorial. It was known that Mr. Karl Shapiro intended to publish his dissent, which had been circulated to the jurors before the final ballot. He did so, simultaneously with the announcement of the

prize, and Mr. Green, or any other juror, could have done so, if he had seen fit. It was thought that attention should be called to the fact that the jury were not recommending the award to the *Pisan Cantos* in disregard of its author's indictment for treason, or what was objectionable to them or others in its subject matter. Their statement asserted this; and finally it asserted the principle which in their view overrode the difficulties and dangers of the award. This was, that literary criteria were the only criteria relevant to their task.

From this arises the important question in the controversy over the award. Is a work necessarily condemned *in toto* by having a certain content, or because its author holds certain beliefs or has committed certain acts? The *Saturday Review* editorial denies the Librarian's impression that its editors would apply a political test to poetry, but they do so inconsistently. They say that poetry need not pass a political test, but that, in this case, values expressed in or behind the work necessarily make it ineligible. To argue how this is or is not so with any particular work is much too complex to have been attempted in a joint general statement made for the jury. From the choice, it is evident that the overwhelming majority of the jurors, who have no sympathy with the attitudes objected to by most Americans in Mr. Pound, did not find the *Pisan Cantos* so invalidated. The controversy over the award seems to make this a test case on the point.

It has already been pointed out that Mr. Hillyer's argument is circular and that a certain interpretation of the statement accompanying the announcement of the award is used to support the accusation that the jurors are dominantly sterile aesthetes. This is the third point to be taken up in the question of whether the award judges the jurors. Do they believe, as the *Saturday Review* would like to prove, that the value of a work has nothing to do with its subject matter, and that form and content are unrelated? Any examination of the critical writings of those of the jurors who have published criticism would show that this is not so. To go no further than the immediate problem, in the *Partisan Review* discussions, available to and cited by the *Saturday Review*, Mr. Auden begins his statement by saying: "I fully share Mr. Barrett's concern over the excessive preoccupation of contemporary criticism with form and its neglect of content." Mr. Tate, in the following issue (June) writes: "I have little sympathy with the view that holds that Pound's irresponsible opinions merely lie alongside the poetry, which thus remains uncontaminated by them." After expounding his view of what constitutes coherent form and its relation to a mature and coherent view of

life, he then goes on to explain what he, as an individual critic, considers to be the chief poetic superiority of the *Pisan Cantos*.

This charge of irresponsible aestheticism was levelled against a great many critics, among them several of the jurors, by Marxist-dominated criticism in the thirties. Now, by an odd turn of Fate, this charge is being made, not by Communists, but by the *Saturday Review of Literature*. Some correspondents in the *Saturday Review* have expressed fears that a similar authoritarianism is suggested in the *Saturday Review*'s attack: that of standard-brand positive Americanism as a test for literary worth.

When Mr. Hillyer is not attacking the Bollingen award, he attacks the personality and career of Mr. Eliot. Both attacks are a continuation of his long-standing warfare with a large part of contemporary writing. The account of Mr. Hillyer in *Twentieth Century Authors* says: "As he indicates, he feels consciously out of tune with his time." Many poets do, as well as other persons. It is important at this point to take up particular misrepresentations of the jurors as a coterie or pressure group; for these may have a bearing on the second main question raised by Mr. Javits as to whether they "are properly representative of the American people."

In his attack upon the "priesthood," Mr. Hillyer names no names, other than those of Pound and Eliot, "their gods." He does not define their tenets, or indicate their number; "*their* power is enormous," he writes, "especially in the colleges and even the preparatory schools. A large proportion of funds from the great charitable foundations is earmarked for *their* use." Even more significantly, he says that the magazine, *Poetry*, must be falling into *their* hands because its editor also thought the *Pisan Cantos* "incontrovertibly the best book" eligible for the Bollingen Prize. Further, the *Saturday Review*'s first editorial (June 11) states: "The 'new criticism' of course has leaped to the defense of Pound and his book." By such distortion of fact, of course, any non-jurors who uphold the award, and in Mr. Hillyer's view apparently any who praise or have praised the writings of what he considers the dominant group of jurors – similarly never fully named – can be included in the "priesthood." Likewise, the tactics already examined, through which the affirmative jurors are brought under suspicion of anti-semitism, Nazism, etc., may scare off other writers who might be inclined to speak out in support, for fear they too will become fascists overnight.

Mr. Hillyer speaks of *their* pervasive influence, and of *their* subsidized quarterlies. But everyone knows that literary and scholarly journals cannot

be supported without subsidies. He talks of "hypnosis," of pressure groups, and of the authoritarian nature of *their* criticism, which merely pretends to polite disagreement. He refers however to *A Glossary of the New Criticism* (edited by William Elton), which was first published in *Poetry* magazine. Nothing is clearer from an examination of this glossary than that there are very large areas of divergence among the "new critics" and the "priesthood," if these are "*they*." Mr. Ransom's book (John Crowe Ransom: *The New Criticism*; Norfolk, Conn., 1941), which first used the term, also set forth opposing positions among the critics there discussed, and assessed their different contributions to an "ideal" criticism. Mr. Hillyer says that the new critics subtly undermine the influence of our great poets, such as Robinson and Frost. But Yvor Winters, one of the new critics, has published a study of Robinson, giving him very high praise. (Yvor Winters: *Edwin Arlington Robinson*; Norfolk, Conn., 1946.) Allen Tate, in an essay written many years ago, and reprinted in *On the Limits of Poetry* (New York, 1948), treats of him as a very distinguished poet indeed. As for Robert Frost, he has been given a foremost place in American poetry by, to mention no other, two of the younger "new" critics and poets, Randall Jarrell and Robert Lowell. Certainly no new critic has sought to undermine the reputation of any poet by such means as those employed in the *Saturday Review* articles against some of the Fellows and the unspecified body of the "neo-aesthetes" and the "new priesthood."

More particularly it is suggested that the Fellows themselves may be a pressure group which has used the "prestige of the Government for advancing its own idiom." This is put forth in a *Saturday Review* editorial, July 30, and perhaps there is an implicit abandonment of the other charges. In any event, the suggestion had been made and prepared for throughout the *Saturday Review*'s campaign.

Let us examine the probability of this suggestion. Are the Fellows a single school? We maintain that any fair-minded person with a knowledge of, or after examination of, their work and comment upon it would find that they are no more a school, except by being roughly contemporaneous – and they represent several literary age-groups – than they are all idols and exponents of the new criticism. They do seem to have been in substantial agreement on the award, but that this was not brought about by pressure has now been editorially admitted by the *Saturday Review*. If there had been a desire on their part to advance the "idiom" represented by Mr. Pound, would it not have been wiser of them to choose a book in the modern manner

which would advance it with less fuss? And as to their using the prestige of the government to advance their idiom, the very manner of the press announcement objected to by the *Saturday Review* belies this. The jury was fully named, and their relationship to the Library stated. It is interesting that the early comment on the award in the press put the responsibility of the choice squarely on the Fellows.

The preliminary announcement of the award, made almost a year earlier, had also carried the names of the jurors, except for one added later, and had set forth the terms of the prize, and the relation of the Fellows to the Library. It is in the pages of the *Saturday Review*, as has been pointed out, that the prize has become the Bollingen-Library of Congress award, and the responsibility of the Library emphasized. The Librarian has made a statement of his position in the matter which has been generally approved, and the *Saturday Review* has replied to him with a curious inconsistency. It says he should have permitted freedom of opinion to the jury, and announced the recommended award, but that he cannot escape responsibility for it. The implication is of course clear: either he is responsible in having been hoodwinked into appointing a clique as Fellows, or he is now required to fire some or all of them because the award has been made. Extension of this by analogy with academic freedom should show that it would really deny freedom of opinion.

Whether the Fellows are as representative a group as could be desired, or as could be brought together for the purpose served by the Fellows, is another question. Mr. Hillyer in his article leaped from his account of the inception of the Fellows to the award, as if to make it had been their sole object. But the Fellows had been serving the Library for four years before the prize was thought of, at no compensation except the travel and per diem expenses for their annual meetings. They had, among other things, consulted with the Library's staff on acquisition of American literary materials, materials proper for preservation in the Rare Book Room, bibliographies in American literature, and had acted as an advisory committee to the Consultant in Poetry (an endowed chair) in such matters as bibliographies, cooperation with the *United States Quarterly Book List*, the formation of an Archive of contemporary poets' recordings, and the issuance of phonograph-record albums. (The list incidentally of their recommendations for the record archive is a catholic one, and the first invitations to record were sent to sixty-odd poets, such as might be included in standard anthologies.) Mr.

Hillyer says that the group was established by Allen Tate. This is not true. Mr. Tate as consultant in 1943-44 naturally had no authority to establish an advisory committee for the Library. His suggestion in the matter was passed on by the Library authorities and grew out of a request from the then Librarian, Mr. MacLeish, that he consult someone on the procuring of funds for record albums. During this consultation (with the late James Boyd) the idea developed that a committee might be formed to interest itself in the development and use of the Library's materials in American literature. The Librarian has pointed out that Mr. Hillyer was informed, though he says he was not,[8*] as to who appoints the Fellows. They are referred to in the *Saturday Review* as a secret, almost a private, organization. This is altogether untrue. Press releases as well as the Library's Annual Reports have announced the organization of the group, new appointments and resignations, and their annual meetings. These meetings have always been attended in part by officers of the Library, and throughout by the consultant in poetry, who is for the year a member of the Library's staff and responsible to the Library administration. Minutes of all meetings are kept and are in the Librarian's file.

But given that the Fellows are not a private club of Mr. Tate's, are they in their present constitution properly representative? A number of them have first served as consultants in poetry and were chosen for their qualifications for this post, and for their willingness to serve during the year in question. The poets outnumber the prose writers, but several are equally known as prose writers; the principal concern of the group has been with the Library's poetry collections and the consultant's work. As to their being representative, as having been recognized as competent by other professionals in the field, the following facts are offered:

Members of the group are teaching or have taught at colleges and universities of nationwide distribution, including Columbia, Minnesota, University of North Carolina, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, New York University, Rutgers, Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore, Michigan, University of the South, Southwestern, Chicago, University of Virginia, Bennington (VT), University of Washington, Smith, State University of Louisiana, and others.

The list of colleges and universities which have engaged each member for lectures or readings would be too long to quote. Among special chairs and lectureships held by members have been the Avery Hopwood Lectureship at Michigan, several visiting lectureships at the University of Chicago, the Boylston Professorship at Harvard, a membership at the Institute of

Advanced Study, a resident fellowship in creative writing at Princeton, and a visiting lectureship at the University of Iowa.

Their books have been published by a great number of American publishers, including Knopf, Houghton Mifflin, Macmillan, Harper, Scribner, Boni and Liveright, Random House, Duell, Sloane, and Pearce, Henry Holt, McBride, Doubleday, Harcourt Brace, Reynal and Hitchcock, Putnam, John Day, Oxford Press (American branch), and the university presses of Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, Chicago, and North Carolina.

Members of the jury have been contributors to the following American periodicals: *Century*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Scribner's*, *American Scholar*, *Saturday Review of Literature*, *New York Times Book Review* and *Magazine*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Living Age*, *The New Yorker* (including their poetry reviewer for twenty years), *English Journal*, *Yale Review*, *Writer*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Nation*, *New Republic*, *Poetry*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *American Literature*, *Southern Review*, *New England Quarterly*, *Commonweal*, *Christian Century*, *Literary Digest*, *Commentary*, *Sewanee Review*, *Kenyon Review*; and others. They number editors, contributing editors, or consulting editors, now or formerly, for some of these and other literary magazines, and for several publishers.

Six members (almost half) of the jury have received Pulitzer Prizes, five have been awarded one or more prizes by *Poetry*, nine have held Guggenheim Fellowships for writing, of which several were renewed, four have received awards from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, three the Shelley Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America, one has received the Dial Prize for distinguished service to American letters, one was the recipient, last year, of the Harriet Monroe-University of Chicago Award; and among other prizes and honors for members of the jury have been the Academy of Arts and Letters gold medal for poetry, the Society of Libraries' medal, the Book-of-the-Month Club award. This is to omit the foreign honors, including the award of the Order of Merit and, in 1948, of the Nobel Prize in Literature to T. S. Eliot, the juror against whom the Hillyer articles were particularly directed. Mr. Eliot has received honorary degrees from four American, five British, and one French university, and was described last November by Denis Saurat, the French critic, as "undoubtedly the world's most famous poet." The two new Fellows appointed this year, since the award, add another Pulitzer Prize winner, another Dial Prize winner, and swell all these lists either by additions or frequencies.

Among the learned societies to which members of the jury belong, and of which they are or have been officers, are: Society for American Studies (Pres.), Books Across the Sea (Pres.), Modern Language Association (several group chairmanships), Society of American Historians, Southern Historical Association, National Institute of Arts and Letters.

It would seem that the recognition of competence in literary production, scholarship, and judgment among the members of this group is too widespread – on the part of educators, publishers, editors, and professional colleagues – for them to be described as a small partisan group. Since the controversy began the publisher of the *Saturday Review* has written to one of them that he had no wish to attack their reputations and had the greatest respect for them all (*sic!*). Their work has over the course of years been treated with respect in its pages; and only a short time before the award was announced its reviewer wrote of one member of the jury: "Allen Tate is at his best as a critic of poetry." During the controversy, a preface by another juror was commended by the reviewer for its wit and instruction; this juror is Mr. W. H. Auden, whose aesthetic was then being editorially derided, and his preface includes the very unauthoritarian pronouncement that poetry flourishes when opposing schools are determined and evenly matched, and when one succeeds in suppressing its rivals, "invariably declines."

If the jurors are representative in the usual sense of being a group of recognized professionals, differing among themselves in the character of their work, as much as in eminence, should it still be said that in the matter of the award they acted improperly with respect to the American people? The *Saturday Review* editors appear to agree that political tenets should not be made a test of literary worth. The objection they make in their editorial of July 30 would seem to be that they and others cannot concur on aesthetic grounds. But what would be representative of the wish of the American people in a matter of this kind? The American people are assumed to wish for a free and full development of their cultural life, as well as of their economic life. It would not be to the interest of such development if members of a professional advisory committee were to falsify their opinions in order to escape censure, or to make a more popular choice. It would seem to be representative of the wish of the American people that its professional workers express their opinions honestly, and so put their experience and understanding for what they may be worth at the general service.

The Fellows of the Library of Congress in American Letters:[9]
LÉONIE ADAMS, CONRAD AIKEN, W. H. AUDEN, LOUISE BOGAN, KATHERINE GARRISON CHAPIN, T. S. ELIOT, ROBERT LOWELL, ARCHIBALD MACLEISH, KATHERINE ANNE PORTER, KARL SHAPIRO, ALLEN TATE, WILLARD THORP, ROBERT PENN WARREN, WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

NOTES

1*. "A copy of the mimeographed version of this 'Statement' [Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1949, Press Release No. 590] was sent in due course to the *Saturday Review of Literature*." Superscripts with the asterisk indicate notes by the Fellows.

The text printed here is taken from *The Case against the "Saturday Review of Literature."* Chicago: Modern Poetry Association, 1949. Pp. vi, 71; 1-19.

2. Following the announcement of the award to Pound on 20 Feb 1949, Robert S. Hillyer, American poet and professor of English at Kenyon College, attacked the award and its jurors, especially TSE, in two articles published in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, "Treason's Strange Fruit" (11 June) and "Poetry's New Priesthood" (18 June). These articles led Senator Javits to demand an investigation and the Librarian of Congress, Luther H. Evans, to request a formal statement of reply from the Fellows who served as jurors. After receiving clippings of the articles and the first draft of the statement from the US Poet Laureate and chairman of the Fellows, Léonie Adams, TSE replied on 5 July: "As I understood that the statement contained in the letter needed the signature of all of the Fellows, I naturally cabled my assent." Asked if he wished to contribute a personal statement, he wrote that "with regard to Mr. Hillyer and the *Saturday Review*, I think that I am the last person who ought to throw himself into the fray at this moment, inasmuch as I am almost the principal object of attack." As noted below, TSE's further comments in the letter were incorporated into the "Statement," which was mimeographed, bound, and issued as a press release by the Library of Congress on 11 Aug under the title: *Statement of the Committee of the Fellows of the Library of Congress in American Letters in Reply to Published Criticism of the Bollingen Prize in Poetry*.

The statement was reprinted in Oct in a pamphlet, *The Case against the "Saturday Review of Literature"* (hereafter *The Case*), together with articles, editorials, and letters from other writers. The Fellows state in the preface that they reissue the statement because it "could scarcely have reached more than one person for every ten who read the attacks in the *Saturday Review of Literature*," and "because, in its issue to the press, it was quoted only in brief excerpts, which did scant justice to the defense in the eyes of the scholars and writers who were and still are most concerned with the questions surrounding the attacks. We have edited the 'Statement,' then released in an unrevised draft, for clarity, and we have added a few quotations and footnotes; but the sense is nowhere substantially changed" (v-vi).

3. TSE stated in his letter to Léonie Adams of 5 July that "far from being a 'disciple of Jung,' I do not think I have ever read anything by that author: I have no opinion about his work, because I am totally ignorant of it except by rumour and report. . . . There is another point, which is rather for other Fellows to make than for me to make on my own behalf: the idea of proposing Pound for the prize did not originate from me; there was no question of my trying to

influence other Fellows, nor did I do so. In fact, as the one non-resident and non-citizen fellow, I do not consider that it is my place to take such initiative or to exert such pressure."

4. The Librarian's letter of 2 July 1949 to Norman Cousins, editor of the *Saturday Review*, is included in *The Case* (23-28).

5. The brief report in the *New York Times* of 12 Aug, under the heading "Savants Deny 'Fascism,'" focused on and quoted the previous two sentences (9).

TSE stated in his letter to Adams: "I have no reason to believe that any one of the Fellows has the least sympathy with Fascism; I am sure that not one of us does not deplore Pound's way of referring to Jews. There are, I have become aware, people who wish to believe that I am myself an anti-semite; and I am afraid that it is hopeless to try to convince such people that I am not. . . . But this is not the occasion for pointing out in public how antithetical to Pound's philosophy my own is."

6. Tate's summary is included in *The Case* as "Annex I. *A Personal Statement on Fascism by Allen Tate*" (19-21).

7*. "'In a period of debility like our own, few men have the energy to follow the middle way in government; for lazy or tired minds there is only extremity or apathy: dictatorship or communism, with enthusiasm or indifference.' T. S. Eliot, *Essays Ancient and Modern*, p. 33."

8*. "Mr. Hillyer has since written that he had this information in time to use it, but 'carelessly' failed to do so. Letter to the *Saturday Review of Literature*, August 13, p. 24."

9. Léonie Adams (Chairman), Louise Bogan, Karl Shapiro, and Willard Thorp were the original drafters and signatories of the mimeographed version. The other members were sent copies of the statement for authorization to include their signatures in the preface of the reissue. One member, Paul Green, had not sent authorization to add his before the pamphlet went to press. Another member, Theodore Spencer, had died on 18 Jan 1949.

The Kenneth Patchen Fund[1]

Julien Cornell, Treasurer[2]
Central Valley, New York

We should like to call to your attention the tragic plight of the young American poet, Kenneth Patchen, and urge that you join with us in bringing him the medical treatment which he desperately needs.[3]

Patchen has been crippled for many years from rheumatoid arthritis. He is now bedridden and in constant pain, his means exhausted, unable to earn the livelihood which he had gained from fifteen books and other writings.

The appearance of new drugs, such as cortisone, now makes it possible to restore the creative activity of this gifted poet, who is still a young man and may have many productive years ahead if funds can be secured for hospitalization and treatment.

A substantial sum is needed for prolonged treatment, about $10,000.[4] The case is of special interest to those who are concerned with the creative arts. Will you join us in meeting this emergency, and in so doing help the cause of poetry in these materialistic times?

Please send contributions to Mr. Julien Cornell, Treasurer of the Patchen Fund, at Central Valley, New York. Please also call this to the attention of your friends.[5]

Yours sincerely,
W. H. AUDEN, ARCHIBALD MACLEISH,
T. S. ELIOT, THORNTON WILDER

NOTES

1. The poet and novelist Kenneth Patchen (1911-72), author of numerous volumes, including *The Journal of Albion Moonlight* (1941), about which TSE expressed interest, and *Red Wine and Yellow Hair* (1949). This broadside circular for mailing was printed with a facsimile signature in red over the name of each signatory. A copy of this version is in the Houghton: bMS Am 1823 (53). A shortened version of the appeal, dated "New York, March 10," appeared as "Aid for Poet" in the *Nation* (New York), 172 (31 Mar 1951), 308.

2. Julien Davies Cornell (1910-94), treasurer of the fund since 1948, was a civil rights lawyer, defender of conscientious objectors during the war, and defender of Ezra Pound when he was indicted for treason in 1946, as Cornell recounted in *The Trial of Ezra Pound* (1966).

3. TSE had written to Edith Sitwell on 29 Aug 1950: "So Kenneth Patchen has been after you also. I wrote him a long letter explaining why it was impossible for anybody in England to send him money, but offered to do what I could with American friends. Yet it seems ridiculous that he should not have enough supporters in America to help him, without our intervention, and it would be grotesque to go to America to earn money for charitable purposes there." He wrote to her again on 9 June 1951 about Patchen and his wife Miriam regarding problems with the fund: "Mr. and Mrs. Patchen, I gather, are very difficult people indeed. I had a sort of circular letter from the lawyer who had undertaken charge of the fund, explaining why he had to dissociate himself. And he had already had a rather discouraging experience with the Pounds" (Ransom). On 12 July, TSE brought Djuna Barnes up to date: "I hear that the Patchen affair is in the utmost confusion" (McKeldin).

4. Patchen also suffered from a spinal injury; the Patchen Fund provided for the surgery that temporarily restored his mobility.

5. Another printing of the Patchen Fund broadside appeared under the heading of Miss Winifred Harper Bonnell (b. 1889), Secretary-Treasurer, Parkside Hotel, 16 Gramercy Park, South, New York City, 3. The first four paragraphs are the same in each printing; only the last postal paragraph differs: "Checks are payable to Winifred H. Bonnell, Treasurer, and sent to the above address. Please also call this to the attention of your friends."

The South Bank

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (14 Nov 1951) 7

Sir, – Although the full development of the South Bank may not be completed for many years, we believe that it is not too soon to urge, and to persist in urging, that all the arts should ultimately be accommodated there, in a setting apt for their enjoyment. The Festival Hall is an earnest of what we have at heart, and there is the assurance, moreover, that a national theatre and an academy for the learned societies will be added to the site as soon as the means are available.[1] In other words, provision has already been made, on a scale appropriate to a great capital city, for music, drama, science, and scholarship. So far, however, the claims of the fine and applied arts appear to have been overlooked or, at least, not explicitly admitted.

We would, therefore, most earnestly plead for their recognition by those whose responsibility it will be to exploit, for better or for worse, this unprecedented opportunity for increasing the civilized and civilizing amenities of the capital. Such a centre of the arts as we have in mind would not compete with but rather supplement the national galleries and museums, the Royal Academy, and similar institutions. To this end it would, like the Arts Council – the prototype of enlightened State patronage – support and encourage those experiments which each generation must make, and without which art loses touch with contemporary thought and sensibility, becomes academic and, finally, sterile. It should, moreover, provide a necessary meeting place for all those interested in the arts.

Before the spirit of communal appreciation of what the South Bank has already achieved, and could further achieve for the arts, declines, from inanition, into a mood of frustration or apathy, is it too much to hope that the establishment of such a centre might be anticipated in the temporary arrangements now under consideration?

We are, &c.,

T. S. ELIOT, HAREWOOD, JOHN HAYWARD,
PHILIP HENDY, EDWARD MARSH, HENRY MOORE,
OSBERT SITWELL, GRAHAM SUTHERLAND

12, Bedford Square, W.C.1.

NOTES

1. The Royal Festival Hall on the South Bank of the Thames had opened in May 1951 for the London County Council's Festival of Britain; TSE contributed to the souvenir program *Festival of Britain 1951: London Season of the Arts* (7.611). When construction began in 1948, the Council provided a nearby site for a national theater; the National Theatre Act of 1949 led to the setting of a foundation stone in 1951, but the Government delayed further progress until agreements were made for development and construction in 1962. Meanwhile, the Queen Elizabeth Hall, with the Purcell Room, opened on the South Bank complex in 1967, the Hayward Gallery in 1968; the National Theatre did not open until 1977.

The London Library

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (4 Mar 1952) 7

Sir, – The London Library, mainly owing to the initiative and persistence of Carlyle, was founded more than a hundred years ago, to satisfy the needs of "those who, the most extensively and with the greatest minuteness of research, cultivate literature and science."[1] No other country in the world possesses a comparable institution, supplying its members with the standard works on almost every subject in almost every language. These books have to be bought. The prices of books, both domestic and foreign, have soared astronomically. At the same time, the salaries of the expert staff of the library have had to be raised to meet the increased cost of living. It was, therefore, decided at an extraordinary general meeting of the library, held on January 31 last, that the subscription to the library (which had remained unchanged for the last 25 years) must be very considerably increased if the library is to remain solvent and to preserve its standards.

We are concerned with the effect that this increased subscription may have upon those whom the library is above all anxious to serve – namely, the "needy scholars." A trust fund has, therefore, been started, under the name of "The Carlyle Trust," with the dual object of enabling students of small means, whatever their age, to have access to the library without payment of the full subscription, and of increasing the educational value of the library by the purchase of important works of scholarship.[2] The trust is officially recognized as a charity. We appeal, not only to present members of the library, but to those who recognize its importance to the cultural life of the country, to contribute to this fund by annual payment under deed of covenant, by a single donation or by bequest. Cheques and correspondence should be addressed to The Trustees, The Carlyle Trust, care of The London Library, 14, St. James's Square, London, S.W.1.

Yours, &c.,

T. S. ELIOT, President.

HAROLD NICOLSON, Chairman, The London Library.[3]

14, St. James's Square, S.W.1.

NOTES

1. The authors quote not from Thomas Carlyle's speech of 24 June 1840, in which he proposed the establishment of the subscription library, but from his assistant in planning, W. D. Christie's *An Explanation of the Scheme of the London Library in a Letter to the Earl of Clarendon* (London: Henry Hooper, 1841): "The London Library . . . must provide a larger and *better* collection of books for the general reader than the best circulating library . . . and will be fitted also, it is hoped, to satisfy the wants of those who, the most extensively and with the greatest minuteness of research, cultivate literature and science" (18).

2. TSE wrote to Ahmé Haigh-Wood, Vivien Eliot's sister-in-law, on 8 Mar: "I don't expect that anybody will benefit from the 'Carlyle Trust' for some time to come," expressing his doubt that "we shall be able to do more than help worthy actual members to continue. And at this stage we are very much in the dark as to how much support we will get" (Berg). On the initiation of Canon Cyril Hudson, the Carlyle Trust received on 13 June a check for £500 from the William Johnston Yapp Charitable Trust.

3. As reported in the *Times* of 11 Dec 1951 (4), TSE was unanimously elected president of the London Library on 10 Dec, effective 1 Jan 1952, and served in this capacity until his death in 1965. Harold Nicolson was elected chairman of the committee at the same meeting and served until 1957. TSE delivered his first presidential address to the membership on 22 July 1952 (7.756).

Books Across the Sea: London Sends Greetings to New York[1]

To the Editor of *The Bookseller*

The Bookseller (28 Feb 1953) 742-43

Dear Friends in America: During the 12 years in which we in London, and you in New York, have been carrying on our exchange of new books as ambassadors of goodwill, we have received from you nearly 6,000 different books about the daily life and problems, background and regional cultures, of America. Some of those books have since been published here, but the great majority of them, including some of the most valuable "human sidelight" books, would never have been known to us if you had not selected them and sent them across to us as gifts of goodwill.

You know how difficult it is for librarians, teachers, writers and lecturers even to get news, let alone sight, of American books that have not yet been reprinted and reviewed outside the U.S.A. Your gifts of new books, circulating over here, are doing an inestimable service in the cause of better understanding.

We, for our part, have tried to keep pace with your generosity – by choosing and sending over to you new British books of equal interest. It is with the utmost gratification and pleasure that we read your reports of the way in which our gifts are shared out over there by your travelling exhibitions, loans to libraries and schools, loans to lecturers and writers, and so on. Every presentation copy that we send you, every one that you send us, represents somebody's personal desire to be associated with this cordial "gesture of friendship through books."

We thought you would like to see the names of those people who since January of this year have subscribed to the fund out of which we shall be purchasing new British books to send to you this year. Here they are: some you will recognise as famous names in the world of letters, others are just "ordinary booklovers"; all of them are your well-wishers.[2] We are not specifying the amount of each donation, because to some of these people – particular librarians and teachers – 5s. represents a greater sacrifice than two or three guineas did to the more affluent. Enough to say that each person

named here has joyfully contributed the cost of a book – or several books – to our good work. They are glad to think that hundreds, sometimes thousands, of unknown friends will be examining each of this year's British ambassador books as they circulate in the U.S.A. For they know that the nearest thing to a hand-clasp across the Atlantic is the chance to handle a book that was chosen and sent as an ambassador of goodwill.

Occasionally some book that we (or you) chose as an "ambassador" has by that fact been helped toward publication in both countries, and in innumerable cases we have enabled librarians in each country to examine new books from across the sea which would not otherwise have come to their attention – books that proved well worth importing.

But apart from all the practical results of our exchange we know that the mere fact that we *are* sending new books to and fro, as tokens of our desire for better mutual understanding, is no small contribution to the great cause for which the English-speaking Union stands. What we are doing in our Books Across the Sea Exchange is simply an extension of what any two civilised booklovers, separated by the wide Atlantic, try to do to overcome the sense of distance and differentness. "I am sending you a book," says one, "that is not yet in print over there: I hope it will be as enthralling to you as the one that *you* sent to *me*, which I should never otherwise have seen." And the other replies: "That book of yours is helping me and my friends to understand your country better."

That human, personal quality in our exchange is its greatest asset.

T. S. ELIOT, President,
The Books Across the Sea Exchange
of the English-Speaking Union, London;[3]
BEATRICE WARDE, Chairman,
B.A.S. Committee;
BARBARA BONNER, Secretary,
B.A.S. Committee;
MAY LAMBERTON BECKER,
American Founder and Liaison Officer in London.

NOTES

1. Issued as a "Broadsheet of Greeting" by the BAS in London to members of the BAS in New York, inviting them to subscribe to the book-purchasing fund. One hundred copies were printed to accompany the exhibition in New York of British "ambassador books" sent to American libraries, colleges, and schools. Subscribers who met the closing date of 10 Mar would have their

names printed at the bottom of the broadsheet. TSE's successor as the new president, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, received a proof copy when he visited the BAS library in the English-Speaking Union on 19 Feb and had it sent to the *Bookseller*, which printed a small photograph of the broadsheet with the text. TSE wrote to Geoffrey Faber the day before: "I have to support Beatrice Warde and May Lamberton Becker in showing the Library of the English Speaking Union to the Duke of Edinburgh (and how bored he will be)!"

2. The photograph of the proof copy shows the handwritten names of approximately forty subscribers to date, too small to be deciphered.

3. This was evidently TSE's last signature as president on a BAS document.

Maddermarket Theatre

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (15 Oct 1953) 9

Sir, – Many of your readers may recall that Nugent Monck retired as director of the Norwich Players and the Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich, at the end of 1952. When he retired Mr. Monck gave the Maddermarket Theatre and its contents to trustees who are now faced with the problem of increasing their revenue sufficiently to engage a professional producer to carry on the traditions established by Mr. Monck.[1] The only method of earning more money left to the Maddermarket Theatre Trust is to increase the number of seats in the theatre, and a scheme of re-building has been started which will provide 94 extra seats without spoiling the intimate character of the auditorium. The trustees have a small building fund at their disposal, and they have received a generous promise of help from the Carnegie Trust, but when both these sources are exhausted at least another £3,500 will be required before the enlarged theatre is free of debt. The work of the Norwich Players at the Maddermarket Theatre is of international repute, it has done much to spread the ideals of William Poel, and it has had a notable influence on modern methods of Shakespeare production in the professional theatre. *The Times*, in a leading article on December 9 last year, referred to it as "one of the most remarkable theatrical experiments of our time."[2] The fate of the Maddermarket is not just a matter of local concern, and it is because of this theatre's international fame and continuing influence that we appeal to lovers of the theatre everywhere to assist the Norwich players to carry on their work unencumbered by a heavy debt. Donations will be most gratefully received if sent to A. S. Goddard, Esq., Barclays Bank Ltd., Bank Plain, Norwich.

Yours faithfully,

IVOR BROWN, E. MARTIN BROWNE, LEWIS CASSON,
T. S. ELIOT, EDITH EVANS, CHRISTOPHER FRY,
JOHN GIELGUD, HUGH HUNT, BARRY JACKSON,
PAUL SCOFIELD, SYBIL THORNDIKE, DONALD WOLFIT

NOTES

1. In 1921, Nugent Monck (1877-1958) transformed an abandoned Catholic Chapel into the Maddermarket Theatre with an Elizabethan apron stage, thereafter directing and producing all the plays of Shakespeare in repertory along with those of other Renaissance as well as modern playwrights. Twenty years earlier he became a protégé of William Poel (1852-1934), serving as stage manager of Poel's Elizabethan Stage Society, and continued to develop Poel's theories of Shakespearean production in opposition to the actor-manager system. He chose members of his Norwich Players as trustees, creating an election system in which players chose future trustees and new players. Monck continued to work with the Maddermarket and to produce plays in Stratford and London after his retirement. During renovations in 1953, the seating capacity was increased from 220 to 324 seats.

2. Quoted from the *Times* of 9 Dec 1952 under the heading "Nugent Monck of Norwich," announcing his retirement on 31 Dec. "With the Norwich Players," the article continued, "Mr. Nugent Monck has produced an altogether astonishing variety of plays, about three hundred in number, and ranging (in his own words) 'from Aristophanes to Anouilh' . . . Mr. Monck . . . has never avoided the difficult play – and perhaps the best thing one can wish his successor is an equal share of courage" (9).

Dylan Thomas Memorial Fund

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (25 Nov 1953) 9

Sir, – The death of Dylan Thomas at the age of 39 is an immeasurable loss to English letters.[1] In memory of his poetic genius a fund has been started for the establishment of a trust to assist his widow in the support and education of his three young children. Certain other funds in Wales and the United States have already been raised to meet immediate expenses but it will still be necessary to meet the long term needs of the family.

The proposed trust will be administered in their interests by a committee which will include Messrs. Drummonds, Branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland. Subscriptions should be sent either to Messrs. Drummonds at 49, Charing Cross, London, S.W.1., or to A. G. Dennis, Esq., LL.M., Solicitor, 40, Berkeley Square, London, W.1. The latter will supply any information required either as to the means of payment or the nature of the trust; it is hoped that subscribers, wherever possible, will enter into a deed of covenant to pay over a period of years, thereby securing for the beneficiaries a relief of income tax which would otherwise not be available. We earnestly hope that the response to this appeal will be both immediate and sustained.[2]

Yours, &c.,

T. S. ELIOT,[3] PEGGY ASHCROFT, KENNETH CLARK,
WALTER DE LA MARE, J. S. FULTON, GRAHAM GREENE,
AUGUSTUS JOHN, LOUIS MACNEICE, EDWIN MUIR,
GORONWY REES, EDITH SITWELL, OSBERT SITWELL,
BEN BOWEN THOMAS, VERNON WATKINS,
EMLYN WILLIAMS

NOTES

1. Thomas died in a New York hospital on 9 Nov while on an American lecture tour. In the obituary in the *Times* of 10 Nov, under the heading "Mr. Dylan Thomas / Innovation and Tradition," the writer stated that Thomas "had intended, before returning to England from this last tour, to work with Stravinsky on the *libretto* of an opera. It is likely that by his death the world has lost a masterpiece. What it has not lost is the work of a poet who was able to live Christianity in a public way, and whose work distilled it . . . Innocence is always a paradox, and Dylan Thomas

presents, in retrospect, the greatest paradox of our time. // He married, in 1936, Miss Caitlin Macnamara, who survives him, together with two sons and a daughter" (11).

TSE collaborated with Goronwy Rees (1909-79), Welsh journalist, friend of Thomas, and recently appointed principal of Aberystwyth University, in writing the letter and securing its signatories. TSE wrote to Walter de la Mare on 17 Nov that "we have already received the consent of everyone on the list, with the exception of W. H. Auden, as to whose whereabouts we are uncertain . . . I understand that Mrs. Thomas is on her way back from New York with her husband's body, and the interment should take place on the same date as the publication of the letter. . . . I may add that it is only at the insistence of Goronwy Rees, who has been the moving spirit in this organisation, that my name is to appear first amongst the signatories."

2. The letter appeared under the same heading and signatories in the *New Statesman and Nation* of 5 Dec (719), and the appeal was reported under the heading "Dylan Thomas," with a list of signatories, in the *TLS* of 27 Nov (762).

3. Though TSE stated that he knew Thomas only slightly, his family not at all, and declined to write an obituary of homage, he agreed to be the lead signatory of the letter. On 19 Nov, he reported to J. J. Sweeney that he had "got involved in a scheme for contributing to the support of Dylan Thomas's children" (Dublin). On 2 Dec, he wrote to Sir Anthony Bevir, including a copy of the *Times* letter and "venturing to call your attention to this case as one meriting consideration for the Civil List. . . . The needs of the family . . . will be considerable, and will continue for some years, and I do think that the late Dylan Thomas was sufficiently distinguished as a poet for the distress of his offspring to deserve consideration for the Civil List."

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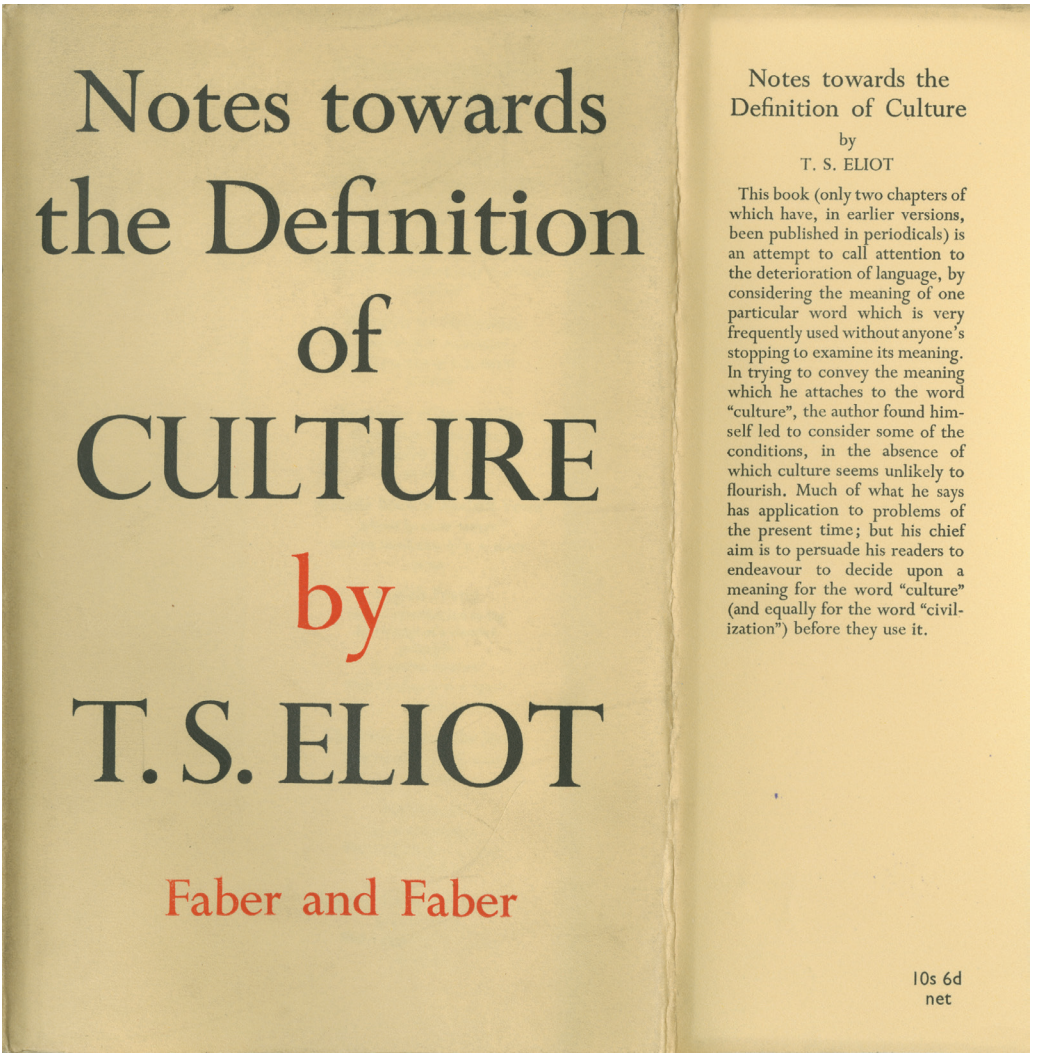
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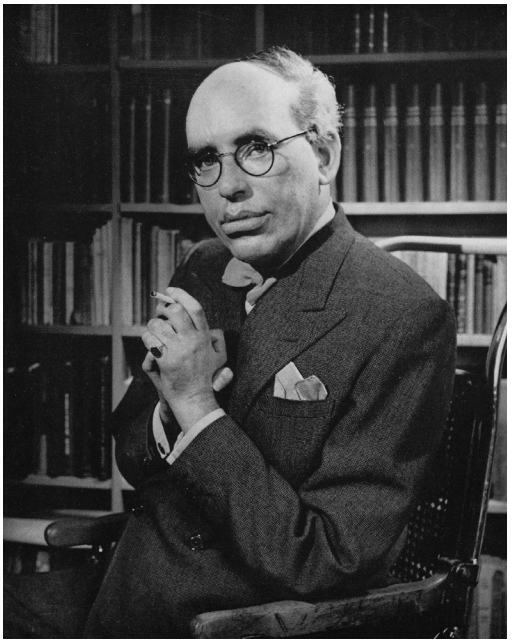
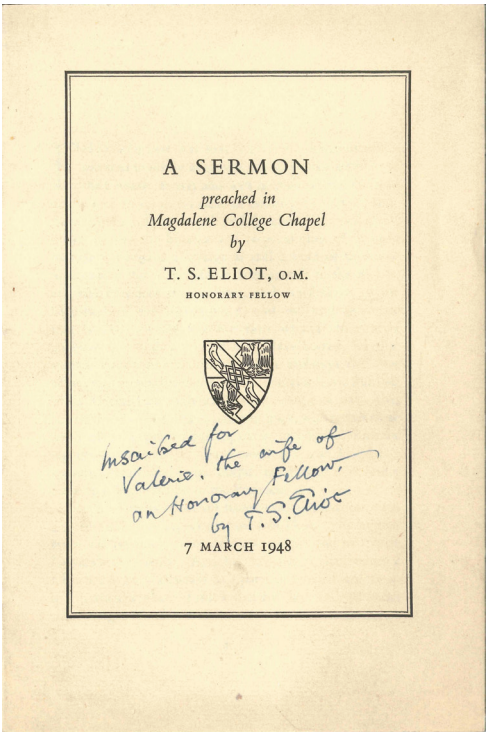
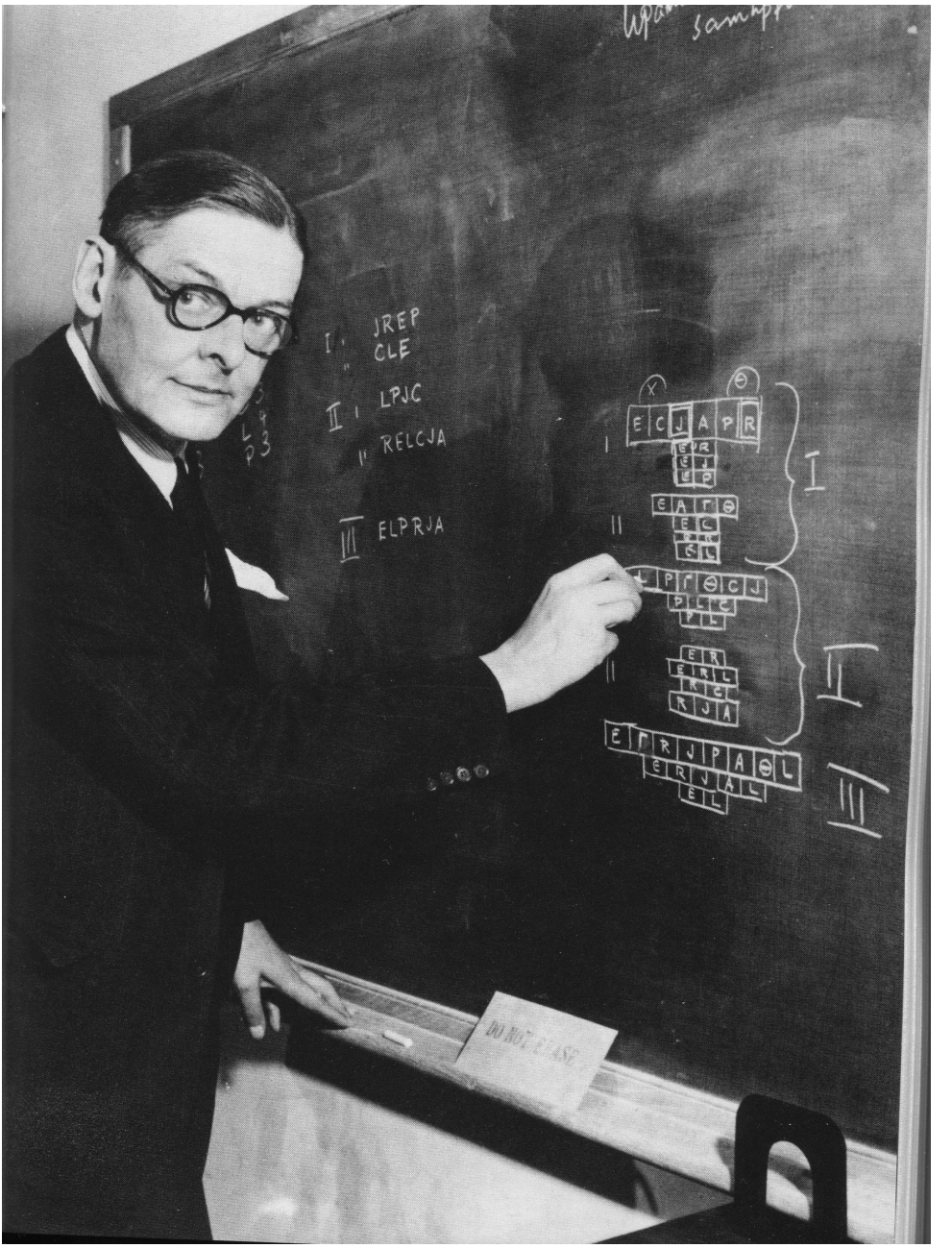


2. John Hayward, in the flat shared with Eliot at 19 Carlyle Mansions, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, from Feb 1946 to Eliot's marriage in Jan 1957. Photograph by Douglas Glass, 1954; published in The Book Collector *(Winter 1965).*

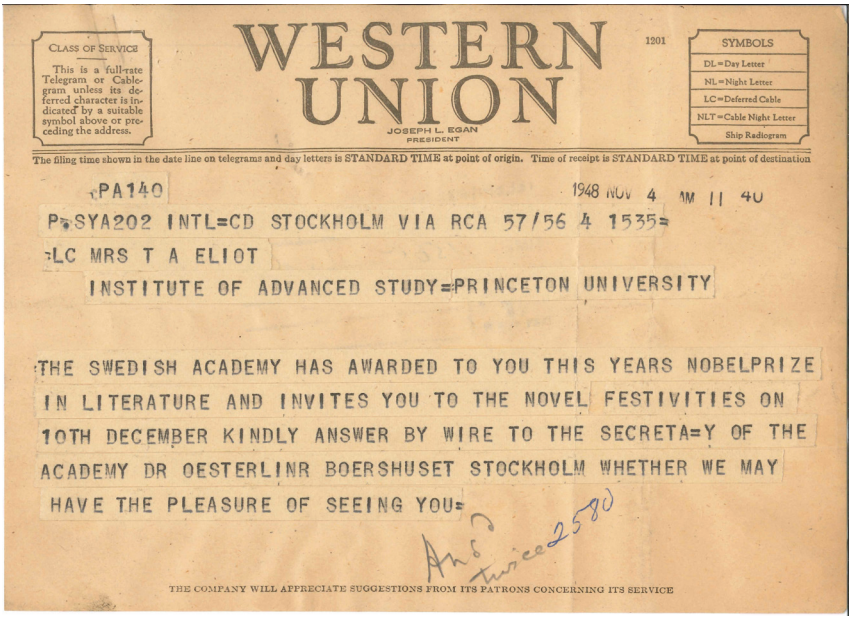


3. Cover of A Sermon Preached in Magdalene College Chapel, *7 Mar 1948; later inscribed to Valerie Eliot. Courtesy of the Eliot Estate.*



4. Eliot at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University, Nov 1948. On 14 Nov Eliot wrote to John Hayward that he had been "photographed by Life *at my blackboard."*

5. Eliot with members of the Bollingen Prize selection committee, Library of Congress, 19 Nov 1948; left to right: *Allen Tate, Léonie Adams, Eliot, Theodore Spencer, Robert Penn Warren. Photo by Samuel Rosenberg; © Library of Congress.*



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6. Telegram from the Nobel Prize committee, 4 Nov 1948, with inscription in Eliot's hand: "Ans[were]d twice." Courtesy of the Eliot Estate.

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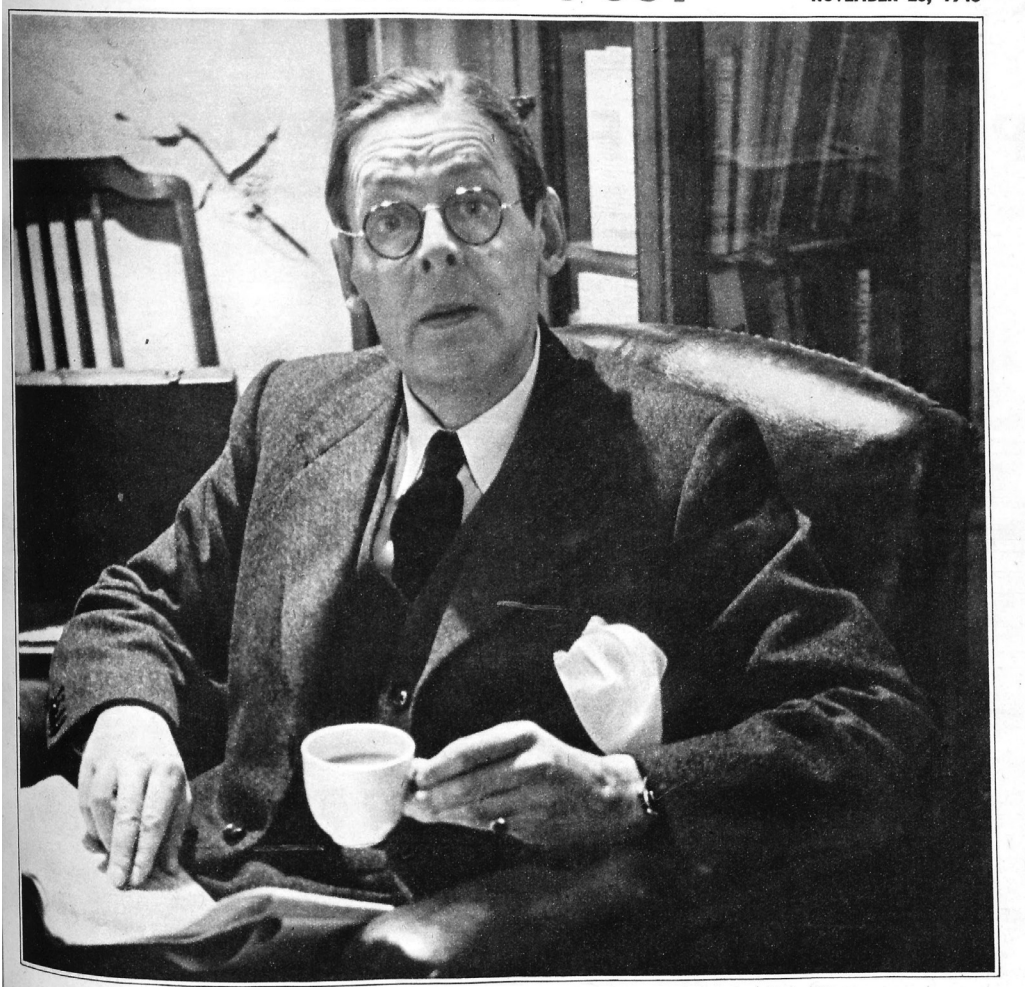


T. S. Eliot in The Quiet He Cultivates: Poet, Publisher and Scholar Take Tea

T. S. Eliot is sixty, and was born in America. He adopted English citizenship in 1927. This year he was awarded the Order of Merit in the Honours List. Now he has won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Most know him best for his play, 'Murder in The Cathedral.'

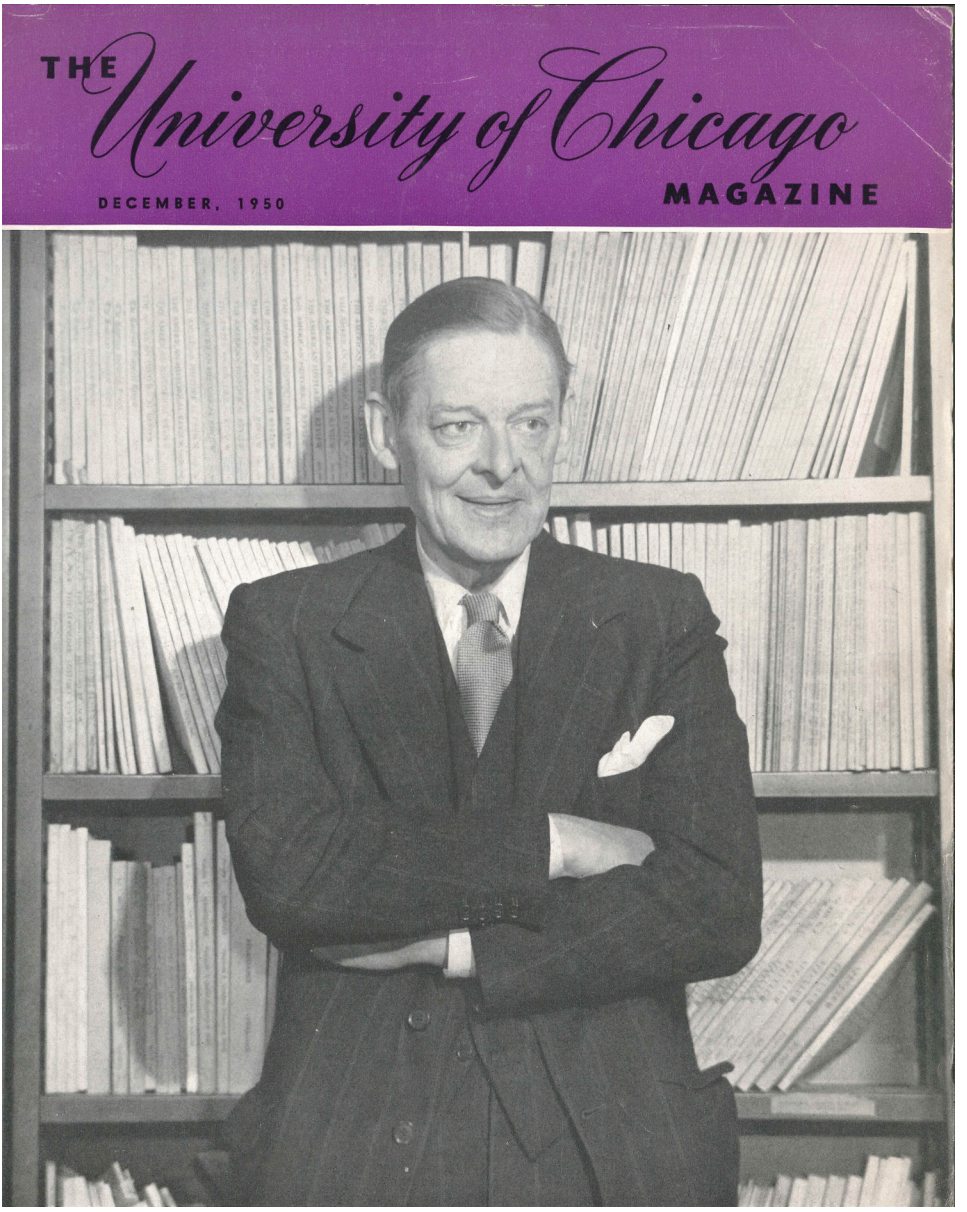
The Nobel Poet

7. The Nobel Poet: Eliot at tea after the Nobel Prize announcement; photo by Felix H. Man: possibly the first press photo after news of the award. Published in The Picture Post, *London, 20 Nov 1948.*

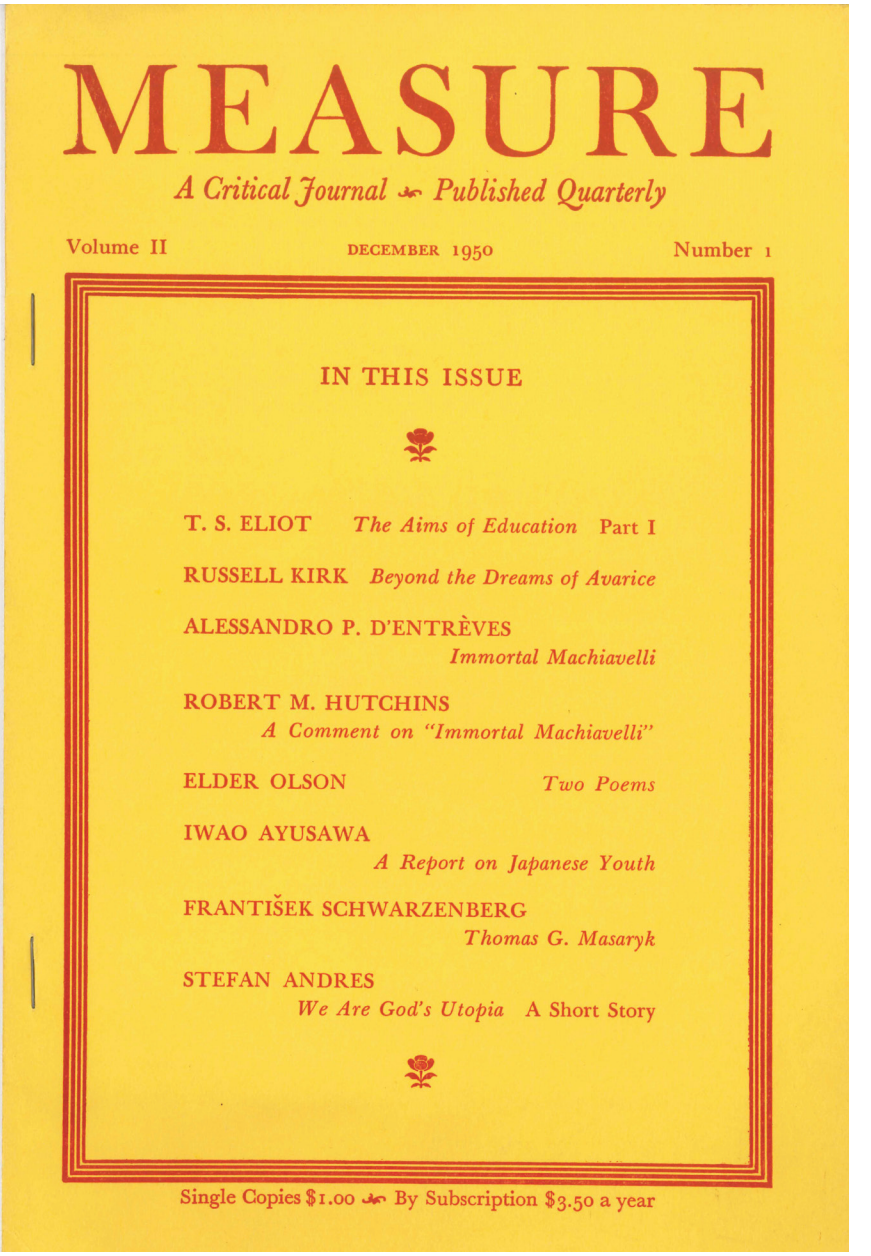
8. Eliot boarding Pan Am Airways plane at LaGuardia Airport on 3 Dec for return to London before continuing to Stockholm on 9 Dec 1948. Courtesy of the Eliot Estate.

9. Eliot at the Nobel Prize for Literature ceremony in Stockholm on 10 Dec. The gold medal was presented by Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf, accompanied by Crown Princess Lady Louise Mountbatten. Photo by International.

10. Lecturing in Germany: standing room only, Oct 1949. Courtesy of the Eliot Estate.



11. Cover of The University of Chicago Magazine, *Dec 1950; staff photographer.*
A note by Eliot appeared in the issue of Apr 1951: "I have got past the stage of having any opinions of myself, about my portraits, but the one on the cover has been approved by a few friends, and so, no doubt, it is a very good one. I remember the picture taking as a pleasant occasion, and comparatively painless!" (2).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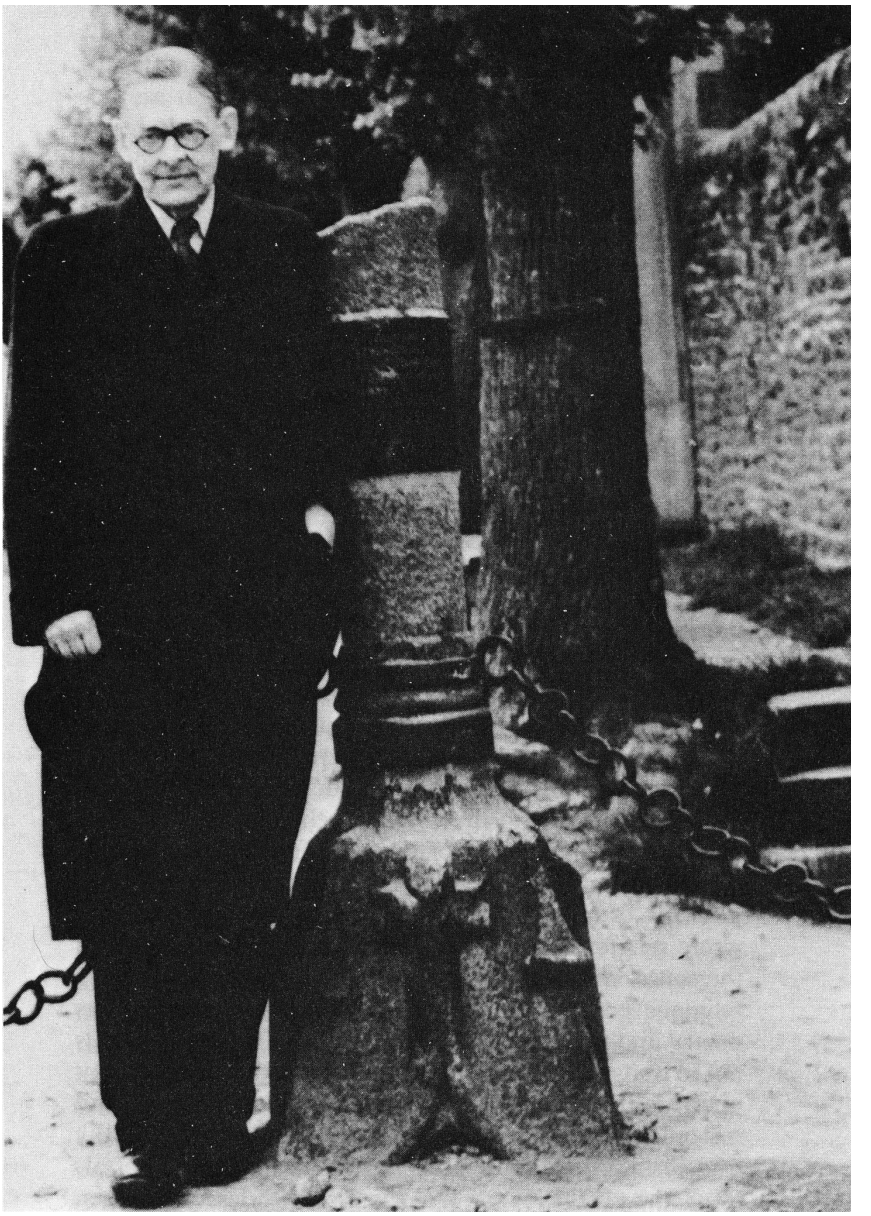
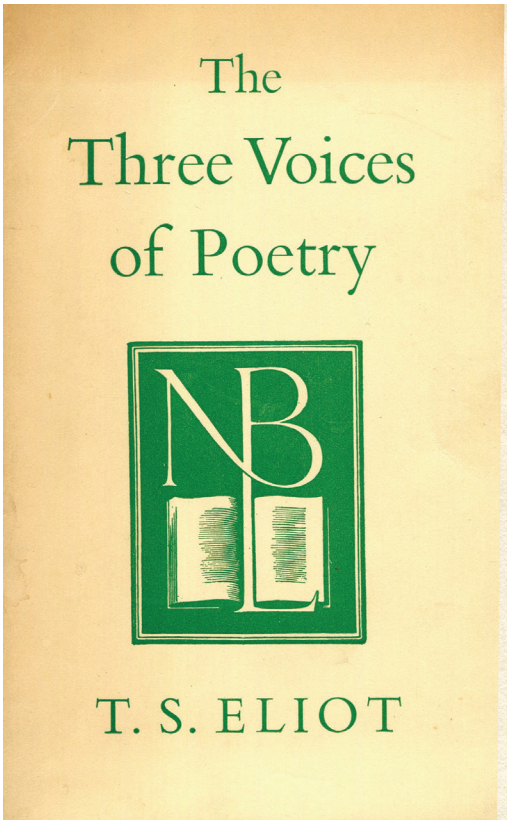
12. Cover of Measure *containing the first of four lectures on "The Aims of Education," Dec 1950.*



13. Eliot standing by the penance column of Henry II at the Abbey of Fontevraud, near Saumur in Anjou, France, after receiving an honorary degree from the University of Rennes on 22 Apr 1952. Photo by Eliot's host, Professor Yves Milon, former dean of the Faculty of Sciences; published in Joseph Chiari, T. S. Eliot: A Memoir *(1982). Used with permission of the Enitharmon Press.*

14. Eliot with relatives who gathered at Washington University in St. Louis for his centenary lecture "American Literature and the American Language." Taken on 10 June 1953 in the home of Chancellor Arthur Holly Compton, the photograph, with Eliot's sister Marian on his left, was printed in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch *on 11 June, with all members of the family named (4D).*



THERE may be four voices. There may be, perhaps, only two. I say this to indicate the tentative nature of my enquiry. And I wish to explain at once why I have chosen, for such a serious occasion as the National Book League Annual Lecture, to propound a notion the validity of which is uncertain, and the value of which, even if true, may be questionable.

In choosing a subject about which to speak on such an occasion as this, I have two preliminary aims in mind. One is, to avoid saying anything that I have said before; the other is, to avoid saying anything that somebody else has said before—and probably said better. These aims together are almost impossible of realisation. Most of us have very few original ideas, in the course of a lifetime; most of our original ideas come to us when we are young and inexperienced; and some of us devote our later years to trying to express the same ideas better, or to facing the fact that they are not nearly so original as they once seemed to be. Alas! if there is no truth that has not been discovered by our ancestors, then there is also no possible error by which they have not been deceived. Yet we go on, to the end of our lives, hoping to say something that we have never said before, that no one else has ever said before, something which is worth saying, something which is even *true*. And while

15. Cover of the National Book League's publication of The Three Voices of Poetry, *Nov 1953, with the opening page prior to revision. The lecture was attended by 2,500 people.*